
BRITAIN'S BIGGEST & BEST AMIGA GAMES MAG
THE
ONE
AMIGA
SPACE HULK
EA's gruesome alien blaster exclusively revealed!
STREET FIGHTER 2
Character-vs-character player's guide!
What, no disk? Ask the newsagent!
LET'S ROCK!
Chuck Rock's back - and this time he's brought his lad!
What, no disk? Ask the newsagent!
SLEEPWALKER
Ocean's Comic Relief tie-in reviewed, and - hey! - it's all for charity!
SUMNER SPEAKS! Commodore UK's Managing Director talks about the future of Amiga gaming!
REVIEWED! Darkseed, Nick Faldo's Championship Golf, Ragnarok, Trolls, Dalek Attack, Dragon's Lair 3 and many more!
TIPPED! Sensisoccer V1.1, Sabre Team, Fireforce and more!
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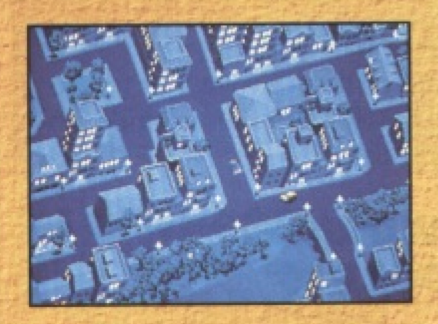
The enemies prepare to blast the civilised world to Kingdom come as they race to retrieve the secret explosive buried in the Lost City of Atlantis.

Only one man stands in their way. The man with the hat...

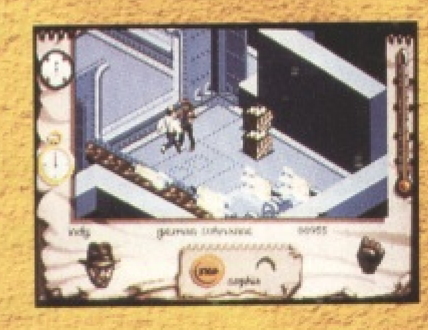
In Lucasfilm's biggest computer blockbuster yet, Indy battles tooth and nail to save the world in his race to reach the mystical Lost City.

Point 'n' click your way through bruising fist fights ... soar over deserts ... plunge under oceans ... and explore 200 + lavish locations.

Shoot the action from 4 different angles ... amaze your senses with the cinematic sound system ... and 'play and replay ' with 3 challenging paths to saving the world from Hitler's fury ...



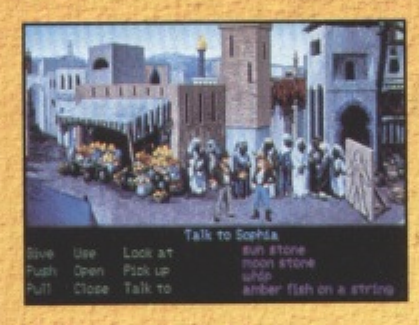
U.S. Gold and Lucasfilm Games present two thrilling versions of this feature game to test your nerve and brainpower - INDY IV GRAPHIC ADVENTURE and INDY IV ACTION .

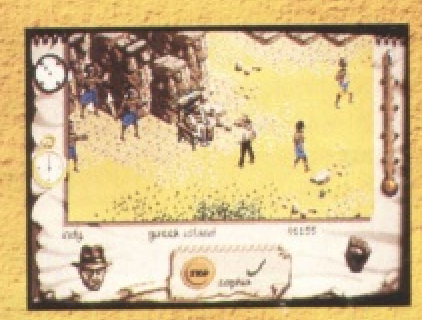


The ACTION game dishes out all the excitement you can handle in a breathless race against evil. The GRAPHIC ADVENTURE Game tests your grey matter with some of the toughest puzzles yet.

Individually, they're the hottest property this side of Atlantis.

Together, they're the ultimate Indy experience.





Screen shots are only intended to be illustrative of the gameplay and not the screen graphics which vary considerably between different formats in quality and appearance and are subject to the computers specification.

INDIANA JONES® and the FATE of ATLANTIS™

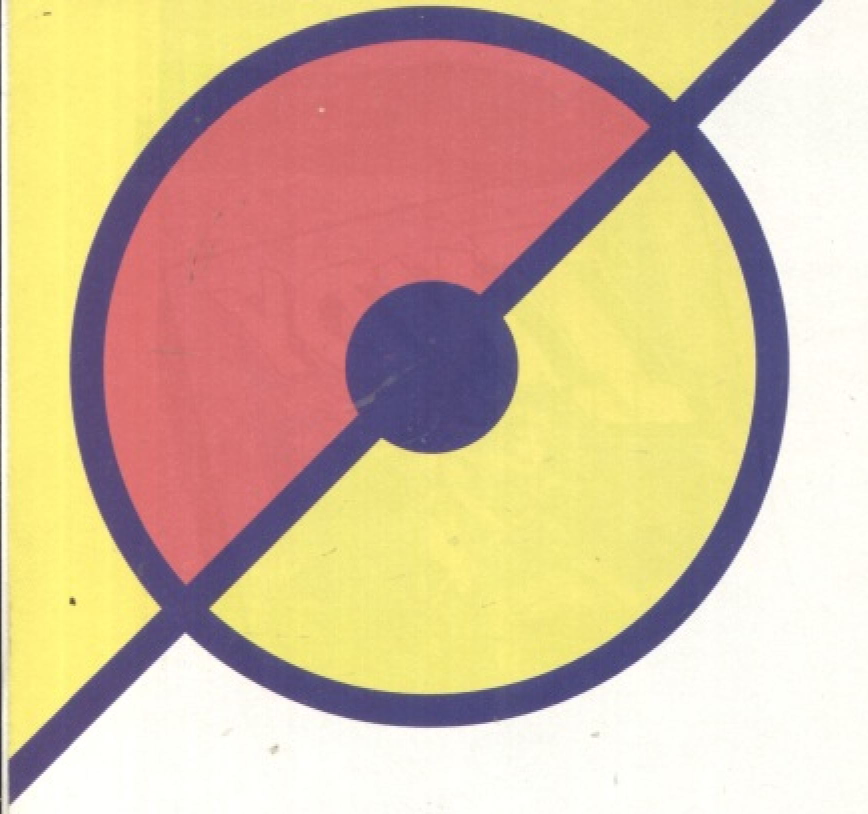
INDY ACTION AVAILABLE ON: Amiga, PC & Compatibles, Atari ST, Amstrad (128k only) and C64 Cassette & Disk and Spectrum cassette.
INDY ADVENTURE AVAILABLE ON: Amiga, PC & Compatibles.



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Our sincerest apologies go to top comic artist Dave Gibbons. He drew last month's brilliant Psycho Santa cover illustration and we totally neglected to give himany credit inside the mag. Sorry, Dave!

ents



SPACE HULK......30

Yo, Space Marine! It's another bug hunt! Electronic Arts' reveals its stunning conversion of the Games Workshop boardgame.

76 CHEAPOS!

Enter the bargain basement of Amiga gaming in our guide to all the games that are less than a tenner or so.

85 KILL ZONE

Can a magazine's tips section be any better this one? Street Fighter 2, Legend of Kyrandia and Sabre Team are just a few of the games covered this month...

100 PD ZONE

My God! It's getting bigger! Yes, PD Zone has a whole three pages devoted to it this month!

104 THE DIARY OF A GAME

Andrew Braybrook approaches the end of his exclusive, serialised diary about the creation of the mega-blaster Uridium 2. Get out the Kleenex.

108 PREVIEWS

What will be the hot games in the next few months? Gary Whitta knows, and he's telling.

110 RECOMMENDED

If you're looking for the best guide to the top games around at the moment then you'd be wise to start your looking here. It's the bizz!

114 THE BLITTER END

The scourge of the software industry is BACK! Gossip, rumours and down-right lies are his stock-in-trade. Tremble ye all!



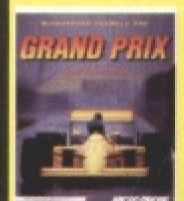


SLEEPWALKER...72

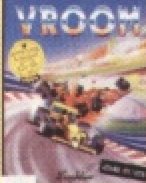
We've got the first review of Ocean's Comic Relief tie-in, so don't nod off now!

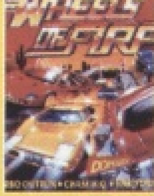
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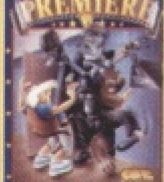
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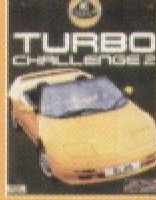

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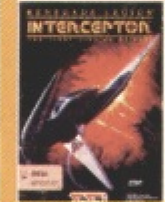
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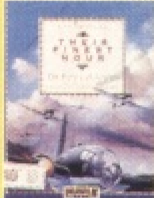

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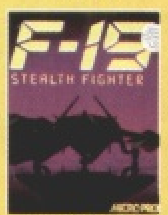

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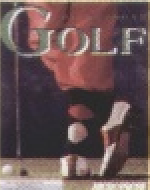

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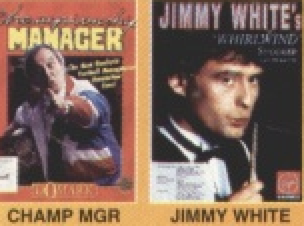

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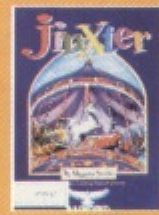

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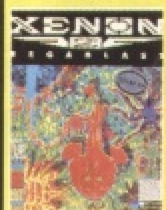


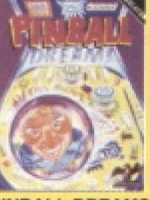
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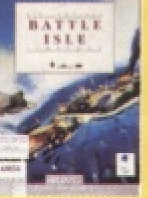

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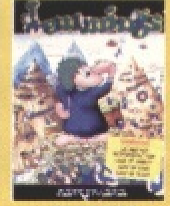

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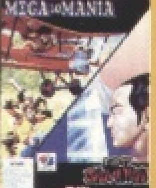

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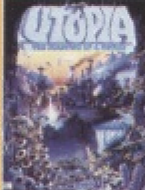

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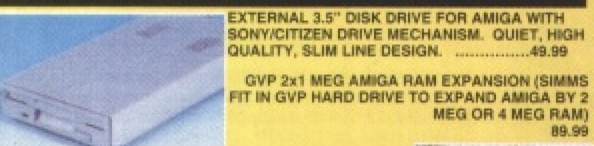

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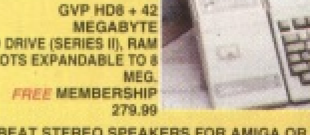
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MISCELLANEOUS

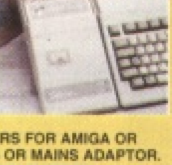

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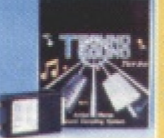
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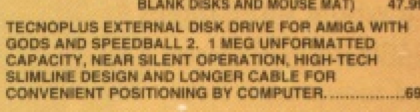

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BOOT SECTOR

LOADING YOUR DISKS

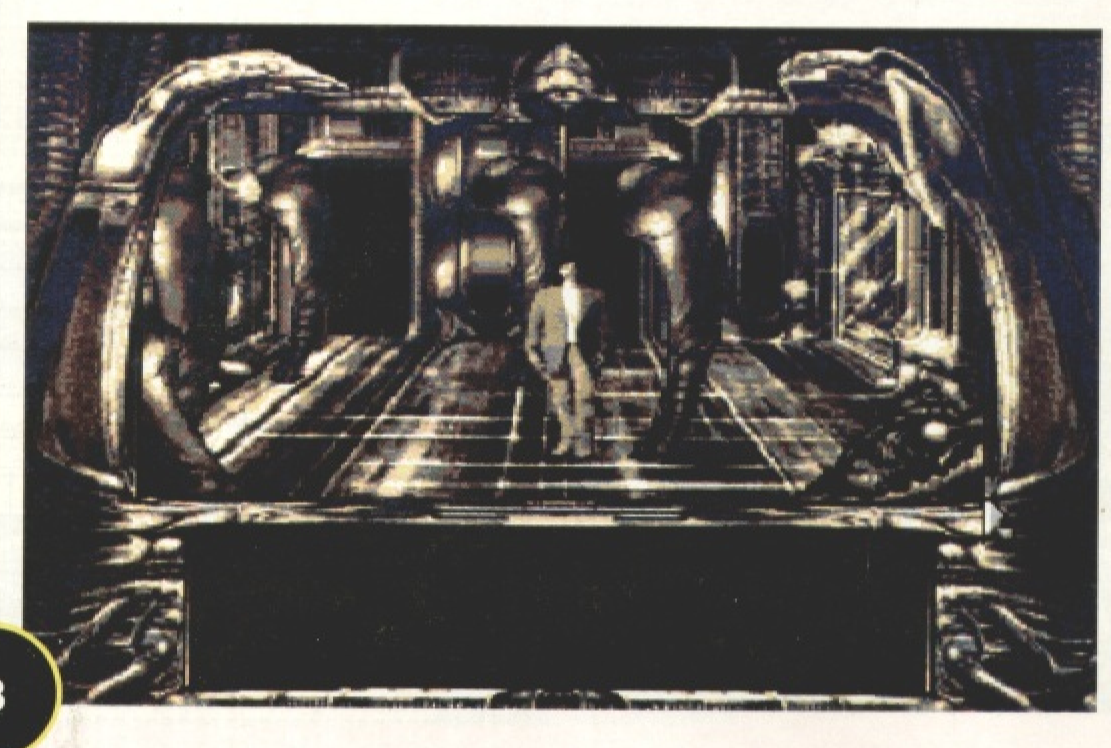
(1) Select the disk you want and stick it in your disk drive.
(2) Turn on your Amiga.
(3) A menu will appear from which a selection is made by pressing the appropriate function key.
(4) Explode with delight as you play your chosen demo.

DARKSEED

Cyberdreams

What with a review this issue and a fully-playable demo on the disk, we've gone kind of Darkseed crazy this month. In this snippet from the game you'll be able to explore some of the earlier locations, consisting of a number of rooms in the real world and a few in the twisted alien world.

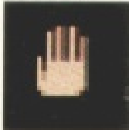
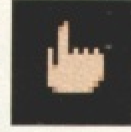
After waking up from a satisfying slumber our hero, Mike Dawson, sets about investigating his new abode. Unfortunately, however, all's not what it seems and Mike's head is throbbing like a spot that's ready to burst. Although the cause of the headache isn't yet known, one thing's for sure - taking a few pain killers isn't going to permanently rid Mikey-boy of his pulsating temples. Enough of this waffle, though, let's see how to play the demo.



CONTROLS

Darkseed is completely mouse controlled. If, however, you're fluffy gadget has gone to the great cheese factory in the sky then you'll be able to move the cursor with the cursor keys and replace the left and right mouse buttons with the ENTER key and space bar respectively.

You can cycle through the various options by clicking the right mouse button and the state of the icon will change depending on whether the selected option can be performed in that area of the screen, as listed below.

The hand icon will change from an open hand to a 'pointy' hand if there's anything to manipulate. Clicking over the shower, for example, will make Mike step into the cubicle and have a refreshing shower.

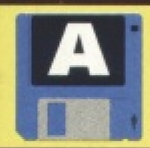



If the question mark changes to an exclamation mark then there's something to examine. Click the left mouse button when it's in this state and a description of the item will appear in the text box.



Clicking anywhere on-screen whilst this icon is displayed will make Mike walk to the selected spot.

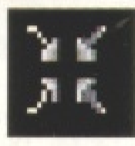
Roll up, roll up, ladies and gentlemen! Get your fantastic, splendid, superb etc. playable demos here. We're no jack-the-lad, fly-by-night run-of-the-mill cowboys who'd be content to offer you one stingy coverdisk. You see, you've stepped up to The One's market stall - the home of quality demos - and you won't believe the bargains we've got for you this month. Simon Byron is the trader with the biggest gob.



DARKSEED



SUPER HERO
UNIVERSAL MONSTERS



These arrows indicate that it is possible to leave the current location and pressing the left mouse button when the cursor is in this state will make Mike do just that.



COMPLETING THE DEMO

After a certain amount of time the demo will end and you'll be shown one of the horrible end-of-game sequences. Once you've picked yourself off the floor, brushed yourself down and helped yourself to a few swigs of Mother's Ruin, just to calm yourself down, you'll discover that the demo will have restarted and you'll have the chance to sample the Darkseed delights once more.

UNIVERSAL MONSTERS

Ocean

Woo, scary! Six monsters have been licensed by Ocean and placed in a game which is so frightening that it'll make your trousers cry. Yes, the latest game from software giants Ocean is due to hit the streets in a month or so but for all you eager beaver gamers out there who can't wait to do battle with the Wolfman, we've an oh-so-special demo, especially for you.

The full game is split over six levels, each featuring a different, terrifying monster. Van Helsing's nephew has to journey into each of these levels and retrieve a piece of the Bloodstone which, when reassembled, will condemn each gruesome creature to his grave for good (or until the follow-up, at least).



As you may have gathered from the screenshots, Universal Monsters is an isometric adventure-type thing with distinctly eighties overtones. The control system may take a bit of getting used to but with the bloody great explanations below, you should have no problems.



EXPLANATIONS BELOW.

Van's neph can be manoeuvred around the landscape by pushing the joystick up, down, left or right. It takes a little getting used to because the isometric view means your on-screen hero moves in diagonals, but it's not that hard to fathom out. Pressing FIRE will make your character jump, unless there's an interesting item beneath his feet (and indicated in the top-right of the screen) in which case FIRE will pick up the item

Most of the meanies and moving objects do some damage to our hero and his remaining energy is shown in skulls at the top of the screen. The fewer skulls, the weaker Van's nephew is and when he runs out of skulls then one of his three lives will be lost. Watch out for the spikes as even the faintest brush with them will mean the death of our saviour.

If your character comes across a teleport (which looks like two crossed arrows with a tiny circle in the centre) then FIRE will activate it and send him elsewhere in the level. Moving through unlocked doors is as easy as peasy - simply walk your character through - but locked doors will require a key before access is allowed.

There's no actual 'end of level' as such - it's just a general walkabout to give you a feel for the game. Watch out for a full review next month. Probably.



SUPER HERO

Psygnosis



How do fancy being able to generate upwards of three million Super Hero types? If you do then the next Psygnosis release is right up your gaming street as that's exactly what the sensibly titled Super Hero allows you to do. All the super bods can be endowed with varying special powers, from flying to invisibility, and sent off into the levels to destroy the evil Apex, a nasty piece of work who's intent on destroying the planet and all that usual sort of stuff.

Well, you may not be able to create your own hero in this demo but, fear not, we've supplied one of the hardest beings ever to walk this earth - The One Man! This super bloke has been generated after years of painstaking research into the characteristics of The One boys and is a mishmash of the three reviewers. With Dave's agility, Gary's eating disorders and my impaired vision, The One Man is a match for anyone. And he needs to be because there's a whole level full of tricky traps, precarious platforms and hard, erm, hardmen which he'll need to face before the time - or his lives - run out.

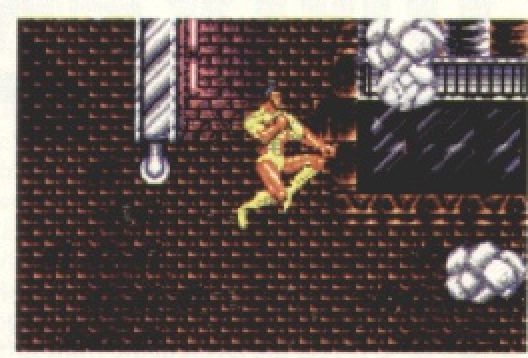


HE'S 'S' - SUPER SEXY

Controlling The One Man couldn't be easier. Simply move the joystick in the direction you wish to travel and, as if by magic, The One Man will obey. Moving the joystick UP will make him jump and pressing FIRE will initiate a punch. If you hold down FIRE, the punch meter will increase and the higher it is when you release the button, the harder The One Man will whack the bad guys. Pressing FIRE whilst holding the joystick up will initiate a spectacular headbutt and moving diagonally down and right whilst pressing FIRE will produce a rather nifty uppercut. The onscreen baddies will need to be disposed of before the demo will allow you to progress further.

Beware of the moving platforms as they often appear where you least expect them. Just when you think that there is no way of progressing, moving around the unexplored platforms may activate an invisible switch which will produce a floating podium - and a way further into the demo. Watch out for the blokes who drop barrels and the poisonous gases which rise from the depths as all these deplete TOM's energy (which, coincidentally, can be topped up by collecting a few well-placed hamburgers).

The demo will be completed once you've successfully negotiated the labyrinth of platforms and a congratulatory message will appear informing you of this. If you run out of lives or time then the demo will be over and you'll need to reload Super Hero to attempt it again (sorry about that).



IF YOUR DISK DOESN'T LOAD THEN READ THIS!!!

Oh, faulty disk, eh? Please accept our humblest of apologies but due to the amount of disks we duplicate there's bound to be at least one duff one and you were unfortunate enough to pick it. Never mind, though, because help is at hand. Whatever you do, DON'T SEND IT TO US - we're too busy writing the mag to replace them ourselves. Just pop it in an envelope with a SAE to the value of 28p and send it to -

The One Coverdisk Returns,
PC Wise,
Dowlais Top Business Park,
Dowlais, Merthyr Tydfil,
Mid Glamorgan CF48 2YY.

and within a few days a working copy will be winging its way your-housewards. If you think you have a problem which you think can be solved over the dog and bone, you can call the chaps at PC Wise on their Helpline: (0685) 350505 between 10.30 am and 12.30 pm on weekdays.

The Small Print

1. Whilst we here at The One make every effort to check the coverdisks for all known viruses, we can accept no responsibility for damage caused by viruses which may have escaped our attention.
2. The One and its retailers are not liable for any unnotified changes to the contents of the coverdisks which may occur.

NEWS

KICK OFF 3 SHOCKER!



In a move to rival a big-money Premier League transfer, Kick Off 3 programmer Dino Dini has left Anco to sign for Virgin Games - and he's taken Kick Off 3 with him!

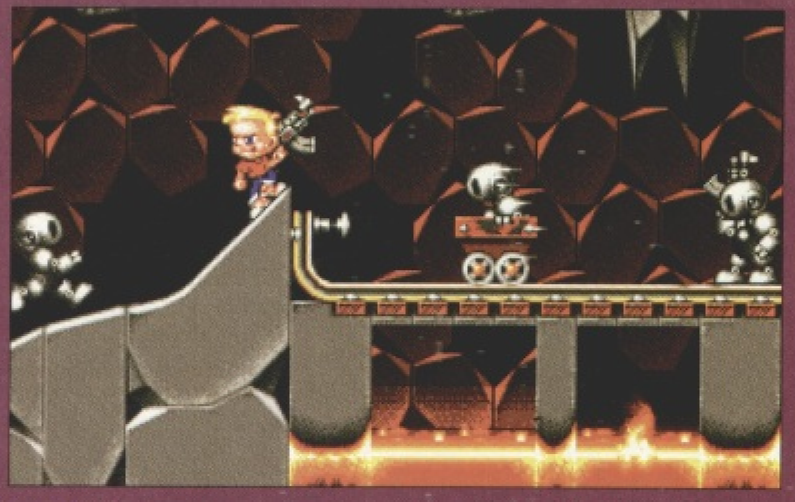
Actually, the official line is that Dino has been signed to produce "a world-beating follow-up to Kick Off 2." Anco still holds the rights to the Kick Off name, and so Dino's game is currently being developed under the working title of Goal!. It was unclear at the time of writing whether or not Dino is taking the work he's already put into Kick Off 3 and transforming it into what will eventually become Goal!, but that sounds the likeliest scenario.

Whatever the situation is, it does put the likelihood of the official Kick Off 3 ever appearing via Anco into some doubt. Co-designer Steve Screech is still at Anco, but with programmer Dino off the scene, things don't look good. Add to that the fact that Anco is devoting more and more time to console development rather than the less-lucrative floppy formats and the future looks even dimmer. In any case, we're more interested in programming pedigrees than whatever name happens to be slapped on the box, and so Dino's game looks to be the one to watch.

"Goal! is the pinnacle of Dino's work," commented Virgin's MD on the transfer. "As one of the industry's few programming star names he will find Virgin the perfect partner to exploit such creative talent. It's not quite Lazio signing Gascoigne but probably the industry equivalent."

Dino too is over the moon, Brian. "Virgin is a company I've long admired and I'm delighted that Goal! has been acquired by them. I believe they'll do for soccer what they've done so effectively for snooker." Goal! is expected to arrive this Spring on Amiga. We'll be there when it appears.

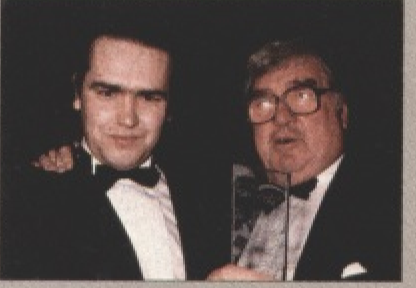
EXCLUSIVE! NEW RENEGADE GAME REVEALED!



You're looking at the first ever published screenshot of the new game from Renegade, Ruff n' Tumble.

The game, as you may have already heard, is being developed by Renegade's latest team of wunderkind developers, programmer Jason Perkins and artist Robin Levy. Both geezers were part of Strangeways, the team that was producing Apocalypse for Mirrorsoft prior to its collapse. The Ruff n' Tumble project has been known of since late last year, but it's only now that the hard-edged platform romp has reached a presentable stage. And... that's about it, really. The game's still shrouded in Renegade secrecy, and so there's little else to tell just yet, other than it's due out later this year. Until then, you can look at this screenshot a bit longer - you won't see it anywhere else.

INDUSTRY GONGS OUT



The software industry gathered once more for its annual back-slapping ceremony at the Portland Hotel on December 17th 1992 for another round of drunken debauchery and handing out of awards. It's a shame to see that, with consoles picking up more and popularity, the floppy formats are being gradually edged out of the limelight

GAMESMASTER LIVE KICKS ASS!



It certainly did, as anybody who went will no doubt tell you. EMAP's gargantuan exhibition based around the stonking Channel 4 show was, indisputably, the biggest live computer event ever staged, hauling in a shockingly big number of gamers from the computer and console worlds alike, and deciding once and for all just who are the world's best gamesplayers.

Aside from including a £100,000 reconstruction of the Gamesmaster set, hosted by TV's top boy Dominik Diamond, and massive bargain-filled stands from everyone who is anyone in the software industry, Gamesmaster Live also played host to the Comet World Games Championships, in which a six-man UK team of games wizards took on a Rest of the World team comprised of gamers from the USA and Japan. As everyone confidently predicted, the Rest of the World were given a spanking they would never forget as the UK team beat them 6-0. Just like 1966 all over again!

Other show-stopping events at the show, which attracted an astonishing 74, 281 visitors, included The One's David Upchurch and Gary Whitta singing the theme tune to 'It Ain't Half Hot, Mum' on the Ocean stage in front of 5,000 awestruck spectators - the audience was so impressed they even forgot to clap at the end. And let's not forget Gremlin's Nigel Mansell Experience, the BMX kids, EA's Road Rash challenge, those ker-razy Radio One guys, Virgin's live Quasar centre, Ocean's mega-giveaways, US Gold's own private fairground, the freeplay arcades and no end of other goodies.

In fact it was so good that the French are considering nicking the idea and staging their own Vivre le Gamesmastere, complete with host Dominique Diamante, and 9 out of 10 industry experts that we quizzed reckoned it was far better than the Phew-ture "Entertainment" Show. Thus proving that once again we are the best.

- this may be the last year in which they play a major part in the proceedings.

This year we were rather shocked to see that Sensible Software did not earn its rightful place as Sports Game Of The Year (that award went to a smelly console title), but Sensible Software still picked up Developer of the Year for their troubles. For your own protection we've omitted the cartridge-based awards and concentrated on the ones you're interested in. So here, for your delectation, is the abridged list of what the software industry voted for as the best of 1992...

Game of the Year
Monkey Island 2 (US Gold)
Best Simulation
B-17 Flying Fortress (Microprose)
Best RPG/Adventure
Indiana Jones and the Fate of Atlantis (US Gold)
Developer of the Year
Sensible Software
Software Publisher of the Year
Electronic Arts
Industry Achievement Award
Geoff and Anne Brown (from out of US Gold)
Merit Award
Hewland International (for Gamesmaster)

STRIP TEASERS

...If you were planning to buy a new Amiga, you really ought to have done it before Christmas. For the new year, Commodore has raised retail prices across the Amiga range by about £30, a move which has apparently been made necessary by the fluctuating dollar/pound exchange rate. See this month's interview with Commodore boss Kelly Sumner for more details. So now you know...

...There's a rumour going around the Amiga industry that someone, somewhere, may be working on a sequel to Archer Maclean's brilliant beat-'em-up IK+. However, Archer himself says that he's definitely NOT involved with any such project, even though he's caught wind of the rumours himself. With IK+ copyright still residing with Archer, there could be a legal battle on the horizon if anyone tries to publish the mystery game...

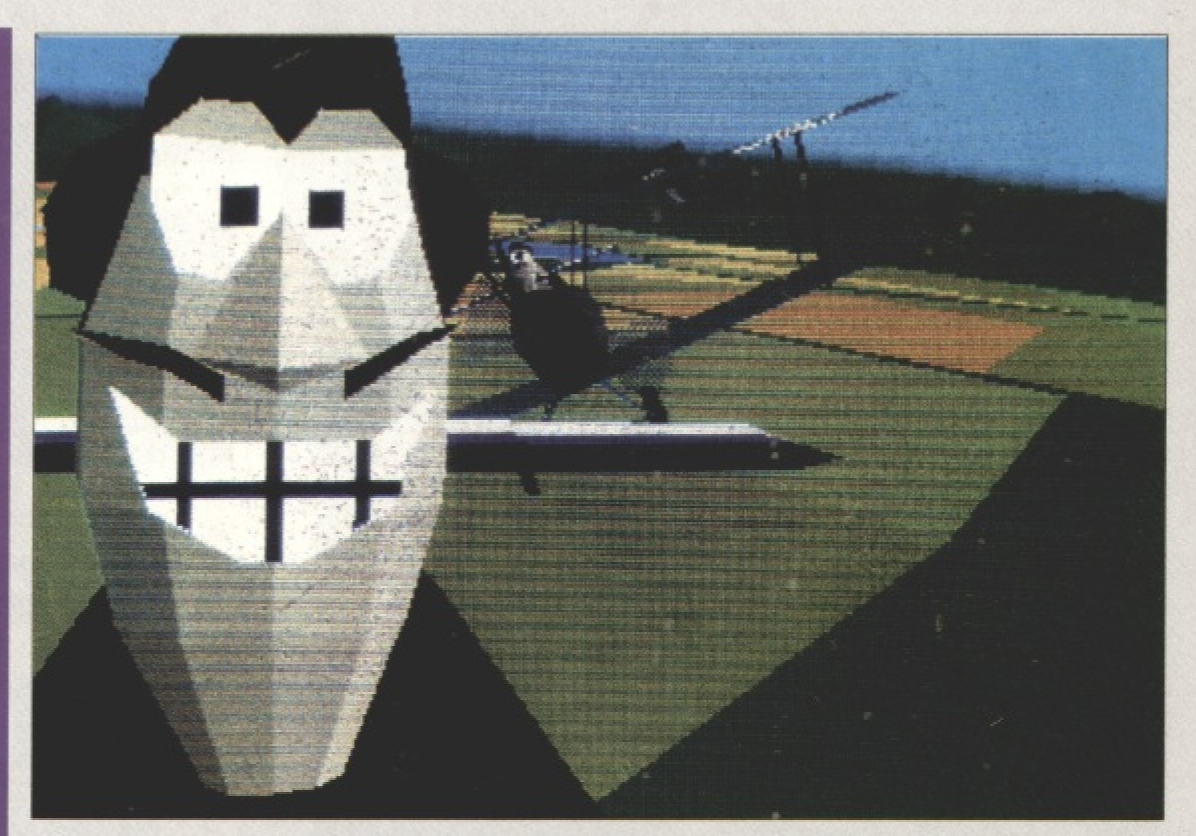
...Mindscape has announced that the sequel to Captive is most definitely in the Amiga pipeline. 1990's Game of the Year (that's what it says here, but we don't know who voted it that) is to be followed up in March with - you guessed it - Captive 2, which original author Tony Crowther is working on now. The sequel is set in the 29th Century and has a cyberpunk feel, whatever that was. And, news just in, our Tony hasn't ruled out the possibility of a Captive 3 either...

...Already a minor hit on PC, The Bard's Tale Construction Set is released for the Amiga at the end of this month. The game/utility allows avid RPGers to create their own dungeons, spells and objects, and then put them in a real Bard's Tale game. It's priced £29.99 and might even be in the shops by the time you read this...

...More game delays this month. Now we hear that Virgin's Apocalypse is unlikely to surface before the Summer, and the continually put-back Frontier and Desert Strike are now expected to arrive in April. Well, they say the best things in life are worth waiting for...

...More games-buying possibilities for the 40,000+ Amiga 1200 owners out there are beginning to emerge. Fire & Ice programmer Andrew Braybrook has recently been fiddling with his old game code, and Renegade plan to re-issue the new, A1200-compatible version within the next month or so, with a Sensisoccer-style upgrade offer for existing owners of the old non-compatible disks. The game hasn't been enhanced in any way to make use of the machine's superior hardware, but Braybrook admits that such a project is "a possibility". Meanwhile, an A1200 compatible (but not enhanced) version of US Gold's chart-topping Street Fighter II should be available by the time you read this...

...Having laid dormant for over a year since the release of Populous II, Bullfrog Productions it has no less than NINE products in the pipeline, including the much-vaunted Syndicate and Peter Molyneux's super-secret personal project, codenamed PIP. Quick glimpses of a couple of the games were shown on BBC1's Artifax programme on 22nd December, along with scenes from Psycho Santa. More on these as and when...



COME FLY WITH ME - VIRTUALLY

Virtual Reality, after a shaky start last year, is finally starting to get its act together. Anybody who's visited an arcade in the last twelve months may have been left feeling rather indifferent about the quality of the W Industries Virtuality machines on display - the fact is, the games haven't been up to much so far. But the latest coin-op to hit UK shores any time now might be the one to take Virtual Reality into the big-time at long last.

Flying Aces is a World War I aerial-combat simulator in the mould of Cinemaware's Wings. Players choose to fly an American, British, French or Italian fighter (strangely no German option is available) before taking on the enemy in a series of missions. Dogfighting, strafing trains and knocking out barrage balloons are all on the mission roster, and a computerised co-pilot offers digitised help and advice (his accent depends on the nationality you selected) during play, then gives his opinions on your flying ability after the mission.

Flying Aces is a multi-player system, so you can dogfight against your pals, so long as they're happy to keep pumping in the quids too. It should be in your local arcade by the time you read this, so why not pop down and have a gander? It can't be any worse than that Harrier game, can it?

NETBUSTERS!

The The One/Renegade Sensible Soccer Netbusters competition just keeps on trucking, now entering its fifth month. Four UK final places have already been occupied, and this month the fifth seat is secured by another skilltastic reader and his highlights disk.

Just to recap, the six finalists (those whose goals sent into the mag are deemed to be of the highest quality) will play each other in a UK tournament, and the winner will go on to take on the cream of the continent in a Euro-final against the winners of similar competitions being run in French, German and Italian mags. The winner of THAT gargantuan battle will be pronounced the ultimate Sensible Soccer European Champion and, for his efforts, will be jetted off to watch a live footy match anywhere in Europe next season. Not bad, eh? The six UK finalists also pick up an authentic Arkwrights football jersey.

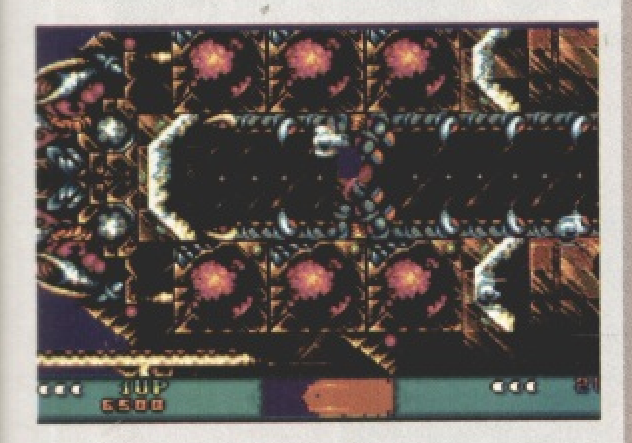
As the UK leg of the competition enters its penultimate stage, final places are becoming as



sought-after as Willy Wonka gold chocolate wrappers. And the lucky recipient of this month's bit of tin foil is N.J. Nicholls from Pontefract in Yorkshire, whose Leeds United goals in four games against Derry City, Wrexham, Kuusysi Lahti and Celtic are some of the best we've seen since the tournament began. The lad is a fine

opportunistic player, with an eye for a cheeky tap-in and some spectacular diagonal diving header skills that left The One's team jumping out of their seats on the terraces (the games room is now an all-seater stadium). We reckon ourselves as a bit hard at Sensisoccer, but if this is the general level of talent around the UK, kudos is most definitely do to you.

And that's it for another month. If you want to join Bernie Holmes, Julian Smith, Muke Ndoko, Gerard Simpson and now N.J. Nicholls as the final finalist, you'd better move fast. To qualify, you'll need to send us a highlights disk packed full of goals so blisteringly hot that we'll need to take it out of the jiffy bag with asbestos gloves. The address to send your disk to is Netbusters!, The One, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU.



POP EXCLUSIVE! THE ORB MERGES WITH U2!

In a last-minute stop-press The One exclusive, we can reveal that top popsters The Orb (and don't try saying "who?", because they're very big on the rave/dance/indie circuit at the moment and will probably be as big as The Shamen very soon, having already had a top album and been in Q and everything) will be providing the funky soundtrack for Renegade's forthcoming blaster Uridium 2.

The top pop signing continues Renegade's tradition of having chart artistes produce the music for their games, having worked with the likes of Betty Boo, Nation 12 and Captain Sensible on past projects. Andrew Braybrook's game, which is being exclusively serialised in our development diary, is due out in May, and will no doubt be all the more fantasmagorical for the addition of The Orb's adrenalin-pumping vibes.

CHARTS

Month Ending 28th December 1992

FULL-PRICE TOP 20

1. **STREET FIGHTER II (US Gold)**
2. **ZOOL (Gremlin)**
3. **SENSIBLE SOCCER 92/93 (Renegade)**
4. **WING COMMANDER (Mindscape)**
5. **INDIANA JONES AND THE FATE OF ATLANTIS (US Gold)**
6. **PREMIER MANAGER (Gremlin)**
7. **PUTTY (System 3)**
8. **WWF EUROPEAN RAMPAGE (Ocean)**
9. **CAMPAIGN (Empire)**
10. **ARCHER MACLEAN'S POOL**
11. **AV8B HARRIER ASSAULT (Domark)**
12. **FORMULA ONE GRAND PRIX (Microprose)**
13. **LEMMINGS DOUBLE PACK (Psygnosis)**
14. **PINBALL FANTASIES (21st Century)**
15. **THE DREAM TEAM (Ocean)**
16. **DALEK ATTACK (Admiral)**
17. **MONKEY ISLAND 2 (US Gold)**
18. **ASSASSIN (Team 17)**
19. **NIGEL MANSELL'S WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP (Gremlin)**
20. **ROAD RASH (Electronic Arts)**

BUDGET TOP 10

1. **ALIEN BREED SPECIAL EDITION 92 (Team 17)**
2. **TRIVIAL PURSUIT (The Hit Squad)**
3. **PANZA KICK BOXING (Kixx)**
4. **DIZZY PRINCE OF THE YOLKFOLK (Codemasters)**
5. **STREETFIGHTER (Kixx)**
6. **MAGICLAND DIZZY (Codemasters)**
7. **SPELLBOUND DIZZY (Codemasters)**
8. **SUPERCARS 2 (GBH)**
9. **LOTUS ESPRIT TURBO CHALLENGE (GBH)**
10. **PRINCE OF PERSIA (The Hit Squad)**

THIS TIME LAST YEAR

1. **WWF WRESTLEMANIA (Ocean)**
2. **POPULOUS II (Electronic Arts)**
3. **ROBOCOP 2 (Ocean)**
4. **BIRDS OF PREY (Electronic Arts)**
5. **LOTUS 2 (Gremlin)**
6. **ROBOCOD (Millennium)**
7. **THE SIMPSONS (Ocean)**
8. **JIMMY WHITE'S WHIRLWIND SNOOKER (Virgin)**
9. **HEIMDALL (Core Design)**
10. **THE NEW ZEALAND STORY (Ocean)**

The One's monthly Amiga charts are compiled by Microbyte.


TAKE THE VOYAGE BEYOND...
VOYAGE BEYOND
EXPANSION PACK
Owners of the original SPACE CRUSADE need only buy the VOYAGE BEYOND expansion pack to play the new missions.
NOW WITH AN INCREDIBLE 22 MISSIONS
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ATTEMPT TO GUIDE YOUR SPACE MARINES THROUGH 22 OF THE MOST HAZARDOUS AND GRUELLING MISSIONS EVER!
To aid you and your troops in your Crusade there are a wealth of powerful weapons including bombs, grenades, small calibre pistols, plasma guns, missile launchers, cannons, flamers and chainswords.
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"Space age adventure has never been so good. An excellent addition to any Space Crusade fans collection." Brad Burton - Amiga Action
Available on:
Amiga and Atari ST.
The monsters are the most fearsome and powerful ever. Watch out for the entrail sucking Vilous Parasites and deadly Space Ogres! The greatest danger will come when you finally meet the Super Dreadnought, a robot whose arsenal is so powerful that it could terminate your team in a single encounter. Success will bring honour, maybe even the rank of Admiral Supremus for the elite few. Failure is the end of all hope!
Screen shots from Amiga format
GREMLIN
Gremlin Graphics Software Ltd.,
Carver House, 2-4 Carver Street, Sheffield S1 4FS.
©1992 Hasbro International Inc. All rights reserved. "Space Crusade" & Hero Quest are produced in association with Games Workshop Limited. "Space Marines" and "Genestealer" are the property of Games Workshop Limited.



Letters

Blimey, you lot must have been overdosing on the festive pop because we've had some seriously weird letters in this month. If you've got something you want to get on your soapbox about then write to us at: Letters, THE ONE, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU. Alternatively FAX us on 071 972 6710. There's a software prize for any outstanding letters that we receive.

THEY'RE COMING TO TAKE ME AWAY

Dear Bunch of Unidentified Tropical Fish,
After noticing all the suggestions for Sensisoccer 2, I would like to put some points forward for Kick Off 3, as this will be a far better game. First I think you should be able to foul goalkeepers as they are the most aggravating gits on the pitch. You should then be able to hammer the opposition's manager in the lung with a toothpick if a goal is conceded.

Secondly, I feel an Indian cardiac thrombosis specialist doctor should be allowed to treat injured or dead players whilst the game continues. Thirdly, the game should be only be able to run on a 4.2Mb, AA multichip co-processor, 68-pin PCMCIA high-tech Spectrum with full-length commentary by Peter Beardsley.

Finally, the new version of Kick Off 3 should only be sold to people who own the Giana Sisters.

Percy Pennypicker, Widnes.

DID YOU SPILL MY PINT?

Dear The One,
I'm writing this just after the biggest gaming achievement of my life: 97,701,017 on the Nightmare table in Pinball Dreams. I'm not here to brag, just to raise a few points:
(1) Stuart N. Hardy: This over-opinionated git has infected many a healthy letters page with his special brand of moaning. He will moan about anything under the sun.
(2) People who moan about games that are too easy: Take Nathan White (we live in hope) - he says that he completed games that everyone else thinks are very difficult in a few days or a week at most. Listen Nathan, you might be a good games player but that doesn't mean you should write to The One to advertise the fact, disguising it behind a facade of moaning about games being too easy. We don't want to know your problems - there are special helplines for that sort of thing.
(3) Arcade Street Fighter 2: Isn't it brilliant?
(4) Lack of inspiration: Erm....
(5) Lemmings: That's brilliant too.
(6) Quick tip for Project X: For this you need homing missiles. As soon as you see the Level 2 guardian, wait for him to come forward to the leftmost part of the screen and fire like Hell. It'll take a while, but the missiles will kill him without you sustaining a scratch.
(7) We'll meet again. Bye!

Lee Manuel, Gwent.

Sounds to me like you've only popped up in the Letters pages to cause a bit of aggravation. Well, I'm all for that - what do our other readers think of Lee's bravado? Usual address, please.

HARD TIMES

Dear The One,
I would like to comment on the piracy problem. You've been having a lot of letters condemning piracy lately, i.e. Stuart O'Neil of Tamworth, but I would like to put across another point of view. I realise that piracy is a problem and could affect the release of games for the Amiga. I would dearly love to buy original games but the problem is I am unemployed. The only reason I have an Amiga is because I was lucky enough to get one for my 18th birthday, It was a God-send that has saved me from going insane with boredom because I am unable to get a job and have no money.

Being unemployed, there is absolutely no way I can afford to pay £30 for a game and therefore have to rely on pirated games. I wish I could rush out and buy Legends of Valour when it's released but I just haven't got the money. I not only wish that I could buy games to stop the problem of piracy but there is also the matter of having the manuals - I've only just worked out how to scribe scrolls in the Eye of the Beholder. But if you haven't got the money, you can't buy the games.

I'm not asking you to agree with me, just have a little understanding towards those of us who are less fortunate than yourselves. I'm sure there are a lot of us in these recession-hit times.

Name & Address supplied.

Whilst we are sorry to hear about your current situation, we cannot, however, accept the argument. Software piracy is theft, it's as simple as that. Hopefully, your job prospects will soon improve and you'll be able to enjoy original games complete with manuals.

THE MICE ISN'T RIGHT

Dear The One,
Just a quick note on certain subjects but mainly mice. Not those fluffy Jerry-like creatures but the electronic species. After loading in your No Second Prize coverdisk, I was amazed how fast and fun the game was to play. But after a few circuits of serious screeching, my monster moped thought it would be a good idea to only turn right.

After further investigation I discovered that the mouse supplied with my A500 Plus had ceased to roll left which meant hitting a left-hand hairpin at 250kph caused me to go scrambling into the wilderness. After a good deal of cleaning and manicure, the huge tank of a mouse still refused to work and caused me to question its reliability.

Recently some friends next door purchased a new 'Wild, Wicked And Wobbly' A600 pack for their son's Christmas present. Peforming the honourable task of showing

them how to set it up, I began to unwrap the various boxes. Then, there it was - a gorgeous-looking creature of a mouse! Rather like the Kim Basinger of the mouse world, its curves were curvy, its lines linear and, above all, I could have sworn it winked those cute little eyes at me more than once. [Are you sure about this? - Ed.] So while I am stuck with a mouse that resembles Nora Batty, this Christmas my neighbour will be running his hands over a new-look, sleek, streamlined animal. Someone should inform the RSPCA!

So until I replace my mouse, could you please print a full list of games that only work with a joystick on the paper provided. [For those of you who aren't us, Paul sent us a roll of toilet paper - Ed.] If this is not possible then please feel free to use the paper in any way that takes your fancy, so long as it is legal.

Paul Bembrick,Sheffield.

As we can't be bothered to compile the list, the bog roll has been handily placed next to the office Fax machine. Looking across my desk now, I can see that it has dwindled in size but God knows what it is being used for. Look out for a full update on the toilet paper saga in the next issue (if I remember).

AMIGA vs CONSOLES

Dear The One,
Why is it that Gamesmaster and every other game TV programme show much more about Sonic and Mario than any Amiga games. I personally think it's disgusting that they think the Megadrive and the SNES are better than the Amiga. Well, I must admit that the graphics on the consoles are pretty cool but I think that my computer can do so much more than the dedicated games machines. Amiga owners can use the excellent D-Paint disks, music writing utilities such as MED and just generally smart stuff for the average bloke.

Amiga games don't cost as much and are far better value for money in the long run. I'm hoping to get Monkey Island 2 and Zool for Christmas and they'll beat Sonic 2 anyday. The only sad thing about the Amiga is the fact that the games can be pirated but we can't all be perfect.

Sophie Reid, Cornwall.

There's no denying that the Amiga offers far more variety than the sad consoles - you only need to take a look at the number of platform games that appear every month on the Nintendo and Sega machines to see that. Gamesmaster and the like concentrate mainly on Sega and Nintendo at the moment because that's what 'the kids' are into. Most people working in the games industry admit that the console boom won't last forever. Over the next couple of years don't be surprised to see a resurgence of interest in 'real' computers as people realise the restrictions of the consoles.

WHO'S RIGHT, THEN?

Dear The One,
In your December issue you reviewed the new Amiga A1200. I rushed to school and boasted to all the sad console owners that this new Amiga was far superior to the tearful Megadrive and the seriously-overpriced lump of Japanese plastic called the Super Nintendo. They quickly replied that because the games are better and the machine is fairly well-priced, software will probably cost around fifty pounds!

So, after drowning my sorrows in a Horlicks, I decided to write to you. Do you think games are going to be at a ridiculous price for the Amiga A1200 or do the stupid console owners have it wrong again?

Richard Ditte, Bath.

Well, Richard, you'll no doubt be pleased to know that as far as we are aware, games for the super Amiga will cost the same price as the ordinary games so the thick console owners do have it wrong again. Anyway, how can they comment when Street Fighter 2 costs an unbelievable £65?

RUBBISH!

Dear The One,
I have heard gossip (from a friend) that there will be a machine for the Amiga that will actually be able to copy SNES games onto special disks. Once copied, the game would then have to be loaded using a special disk drive (which, so I'm told, will cost about £200). Now I don't know if this is true or not which is why I'm asking the guys who should know.

Thomas Walters, Rainham.

Erm, I don't know who your friend is but he's seriously wrong. There's no way that a machine like this will ever exist (legally, anyway). Nintendo aren't likely to let Mario appear officially on the Amiga so just imagine what they'd think about this device. Who'd want to play endless platform games anyway?

HELP!

Dear The One,
In the last issue you gave away the excellent Psycho Santa game which has kept me away from endless turkey sandwiches and boring relatives for most of the festive period. The thing is, though, I can't manage to grab the star at the top of the tree. I've only ever managed to bounce that high once and when I was level with it, Santa just left it alone. What am I doing wrong?

Lisa Mortimore, Winton.

Well, if you collect every present on your way to the star, Santa will reach out and pluck the star from the top of the tree and gain himself an extra 10,000 points. Hope that sorts you out.



STREET FIGHTER 2 POSTER WINNER!

Dear The One,
I feel that I must write to you about your magazine. I've only bought the last three issues since your revamp but things have been going on that have been bugging me and it's about time it was stopped. November's mistakes I passed of as just proof-reading errors, very bad proof-reading errors. December's 'errors' really wound me up and the people responsible should be shouted at very loudly. Just when I thought the worst was over and nothing else could happen, the January issue came out. "What are the problems you're so annoyed about?" Well I'll tell you.

With the first edition I bought, November's, I liked the look of the magazine and with a preview of the long-awaited Street Fighter 2 inside I handed over my cash. I took the magazine home and read it and found it very good. Later I noticed that the cover advertised a free Street Fighter 2 poster. "Yippee," I thought, "that'll go nicely on my wall." But could I find a poster inside? Not a single glimmer of it. I still thought the magazine was good even without the poster but after inspecting other copies some days later I found none had posters in them. Where were they?

I wondered if this would have happened if I'd subscribed so I opened the contents pages to look for the subscriptions and turned to that page only to find an advert for a PC Bible. "Maybe it'll be in next month's issue," I wondered.

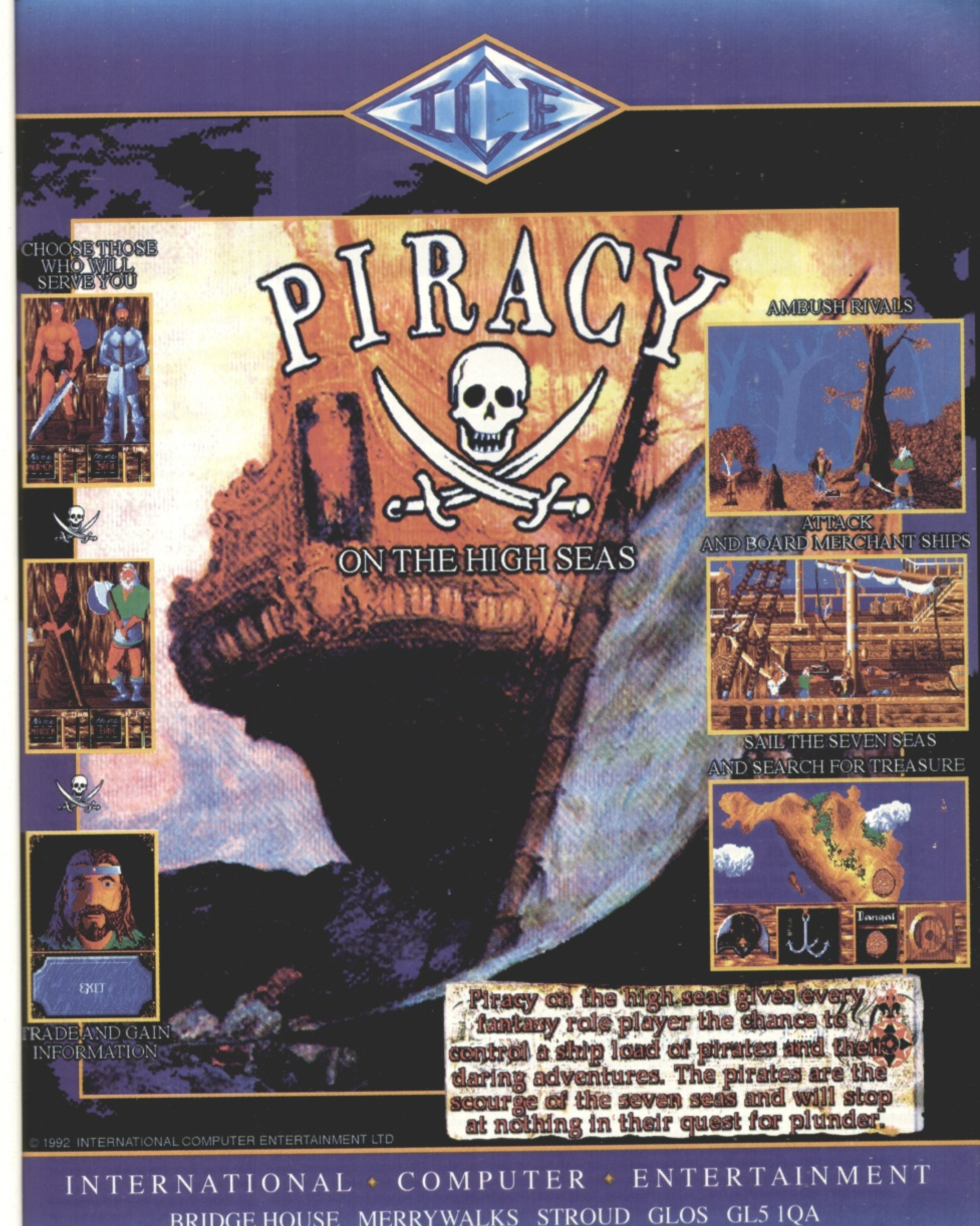
Next month came so I bought it from W.H. Smiths - three days after it was supposed to go on sale, I might add. This kind of thing wouldn't happen again if I subscribed, I hoped. "Surely next month," I decided.

Well, according to the back page of the previous issue, the January issue should have hit the streets on the 21st December. 'Christmas 4 days early was the boast with the promise of loads of great games reviewed. I bought my copy on the first day it was out... the 5th of January with none of the 'definites' advertised in the December issue. Christmas had come eleven days late and still no subscription form, not even a mention on the contents page.

What's going on? Am I the only one to notice these things? By the looks of your letters page I am. It seems full of self-gratifying compliments on how great you are, and how people would burn their grannies rather than sell their Amigas. Hopefully these aren't the sign of a drowning ship because with all these faults I still rate your magazine very highly. Get it sorted and sorted fast before you needlessly lose readers.

Johnathan Pearson, Gosport.

We're the first to admit that, occasionally, errors creep into the magazine and we apologise for that. Sorry. The subscription offers are still being negotiated and a new advert should appear soon. As for the poster, well, it wasn't an error or anything like that - all the copies we saw definitely had posters in them but we'll send you one anyway to make up for your loss. As for your complaints about the game's promised for review not appearing, well, yes, guilty as charged, m'lud. At the time of going to print we were assured that the game's mentioned would be ready for us to cast our beady gaze over but when it came to the crunch they weren't due to slippage and so on. Again, sorry. The January issue appeared in the shops around us as early as December 17th so I can't quite figure out what went wrong in your area - perhaps it's worth inquiring with your local newsagent as to what happened.


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KELLY



To Amiga gamesplayers, this man is probably the most important figure in the computer industry. He's Kelly Sumner, Managing Director of Commodore UK, and the decisions that he makes affect us all. Since he took over, he's launched the A600 and the A1200, and now he wants to make CD the Amiga gaming medium of the future. Just who the hell does this man think he is? Gary Whitta went to find out.

In the middle of a rotten recession and the wake of a massive Sega and Nintendo console boom over Christmas, there are plenty of people in the computer industry willing to tell you that the Amiga is on the way out - but if you talk to Kelly Sumner, the man who should know better than anybody, the future of the country's favourite games computer has never looked rosier. He's confident that with the advent of CD-ROM and some other tasty technology on the horizon, the Amiga will still be going strong long after those tatty console-type things have fizzled out.

Of course, he would say that, but is it all hot air? Well... probably not, actually. Kelly's one of a dying breed - one of the few people left in the software industry who will actually talk straight, rather than trying to call a spade a handheld soil removal facilitator. And when it comes to the subject of the Amiga, he knows his onions like few others do.

A Commodore stalwart to the last, 31-year old Kelly has been with the company for 14 years, which makes him the UK company's longest-serving employee. And, unlike certain other heavy-hitters we could mention, he's still an enthusiast, having joined the company not from a business background but as a trainee electronics engineer in the service department after some unsuccessful dabblings in the catering biz.

After four years of repairing everything from digital watches to electronic chess games, Kelly moved into sales, flogging C64s and VIC 20s (remember them?) to the retailers, and it was around that time that the Amiga first appeared in the guise of the A1000. Kelly's interest in the new technology was immediate, so he was quickly transferred into the Amiga division to look after the new machine - and from then on his rise up the CBM ladder has been meteoric.

Kelly finally took over the Managing Director's hotseat after Steve Franklin, the last MD, moved to look after the CDTV side of things (he later resigned). Since he took over, the Amiga scene has changed drastically, with the arrival of two new machines - the A600 and the groundbreaking A1200, which Kelly is confident will be the machine to take the Amiga into the 90s and beyond.

So, with the Amiga at what is probably its most interesting point since the machine appeared in the mid-80s, what better time to corner the man at the centre of it all and throw a few teasing questions his way...?

How do you see the Amiga evolving over the next five years?

Well, five years is a long time. The Amiga's only been around for five years, so it's very difficult to say what's going to happen in the next five. You can talk about maybe one, two or even three with some commitment. So far as the last year is concerned, even with the advent of Sega and Nintendo coming to the fore in the games market, the Amiga still sold more machines this year than it did last year - and that's just the base machine, not counting the 1200.

Our idea is that we will try and make the Amiga 600 the C64 of the 90s and make the A1200 the Amiga 500 of the 90s, the aspirational machine. I think that with the new chipset we've just brought out we'd be crazy to change that again in the next six months or a year, but it'll certainly be improved over the next five years, there's no question about that. Sound is a potential, because we haven't changed the sound since the original Amiga, so may be putting a DSP chip in there at some stage is an idea, but I think the biggest thing will be that CD drives will become more of a standard than 3.5" floppy drives.

There are a number of reasons. For the trade piracy is a big one, but for the end user, you can get a much bigger, better game for almost the same price. So, I'd say in five years definitely improved sound, even better improved graphics and CD-ROMs embedded.

There's been a lot of speculation recently about an Amiga console, which Commodore has denied. Can you really rule such a machine out?

Well, when Jay Miner originally designed the Amiga, his idea was to produce the best games-playing machine ever. And we turned it into a computer to make it more acceptable to the market, so its roots have always been as a games-playing machine - there's no question about that. What we have to work out within the company is - yes, we could produce a console, but will we? It depends on whether we believe we'll get the return on it. If we produced a console now obviously the A600 and 1200 sales would be hit, because people would buy the console instead of that machine. So we have the ability, but its questionable whether we will do it. But put it this way; we're probably closer now than we ever have been because of CDs.

Sega and Nintendo are enjoying a lot of success at the moment, but many people are saying that the consoles will only be around for a couple of years. Do they represent any threat to the Amiga as a games machine?

No, I think we've seen the boom Christmas from Sega and Nintendo. They've done very well, but next year's going to be interesting because there are a number of people that are going to come into the market with significantly better machines, 32-bit machines with more colours, more capability, etc. I can't see Sega and Nintendo responding to that within an 18-month timeframe, so it could well be that they lose the market to other people coming in.

I think the games machines will always be here, in one shape or other, but I think that what's going

VISION

to happen in the next couple of years is that you're going to buy an entertainment unit, rather than just a games console. That entertainment unit will obviously play games, but it will also play CD audio, play feature films and have a multitude of devices that you can use.

Much of the industry is of the growing opinion that a lot of development talent is being lost to the console brain-drain. Is the Amiga as much of a breeding ground for originality and creative development as it was a year or so ago?

I think it is - at the moment. If the consoles continue to be as successful as they have been, then it is a real threat. At the moment, although consoles are being bought by a wide span of people, the majority of users are in the seven to ten age group. The talent is born in the teens, as people become more serious about what they're doing. If the Amiga was to die out tomorrow then the industry would have a big problem, simply because you can't learn programming on a Sega or Nintendo. Most of the programmers coming through to the publishing companies are from the Amiga community.

Do you think the stereotypical alone-in-his-bedroom programmer still exists?

Oh, they definitely do, and there's a real concern with the major publishers like Ocean, Microprose and Electronic Arts that, if Sega and Nintendo were a totally dominant force and there was nothing else in the market, where are they going to get their talent from? It just won't exist, and they need new talent coming through all the time.

Do you expect most people who own Amigas to upgrade to the A1200 in the future?

I'd love them all to upgrade, because there's well over a million of them out there!

Can the two machines, the A500/600, and the A1200 happily co-exist?

Yes, they can. The C64 and the A500

> **"If the Amiga was to die out tomorrow, then the industry would have a big problem."**



have been co-existing for five years now, although the C64 has been hit recently by the arrival of Sega and Nintendo. There's no reason, given that the pricepoint and packages are right, why the A600 and the A1200 can't co-exist at least for another couple of years. The A600 definitely figures in our plans for the next two years - after then we're not really sure because we don't know what else is going to be on the market then.

Do you have any plans for a trade-in deal, where Amiga owners can upgrade to an A1200?

It would make sense if we priced the A1200 at £499. Most people were shocked and startled when we brought out the product at £399, and keeping it at £399 has been difficult with the currency situation. We thought the best idea was simply to bring the machine out as cheap as possible and then let people make their own decision. I'd say that about 85-95% of the A1200 we've sold are owned by A500 upgraders, and I think what's happening is the guy who gets his A1200 is passing his old A500 down to his younger brother. And I'm certainly very happy to have two Amigas in every household!

How much of a crossover do you see between PC and A1200 games in the future? Does either machine pose a threat to the other?

No, I don't think so. For the last eighteen months everyone has been saying how there's going to be this big boom in home PCs. It still hasn't happened and I don't think it will happen. A decent PC still costs around £800-900, and not many people have that kind of money. I don't think that PCs are going to be a threat to the Amiga over the next two or three years - at the moment PCs are probably as cheap as they're going to get for at least a year because, quite frankly, nobody is making money selling PCs right now. PC prices have come down as far as they can, but we're going to continue working on the Amiga to bring it down even further.

Everyone has applauded the arrival of the A1200. From a games point of view, what is the thinking behind the new machine, and what are your hopes for it in the future?

I think there are a couple of reasons why people are pleased; (a) because we kept it fairly quiet up until launch, so people didn't form opinions about what we were launching, and (b) because it's one hell of a machine for under £400. We didn't design the A1200 purely as a games machine, but saying that, it is probably the best games machine. If you speak to publishers, they'll say that it's at least three to five times faster than the Amiga, which obviously makes things like flight simulators and shoot-'em-ups pretty damn interesting.

I think when developers get to grips with the AA chipset and the amount of colours, that's going to make it interesting. Look at the new version of Zool - it's a

much better game on the A1200, and these guys are really just scratching the surface at the moment. All round, it gives publishers the things that they wanted to take the Amiga onto the next stage. They were really pushing and pushing the Amiga for years, and now they can open the floodgates and produce things that they didn't think were possible six months ago.

People can say about the A1200 "Oh, there's no hard disk in there" but, quite frankly, what hard disk do you put in there? 20, 40, 60, 80, 120Mb? Anyway, we believe that hard disks are soon going to be outdated by smart card devices, and that within a very short period of time people won't have to open their machines to fit a hard drive. They'll buy a 40Mb smart card and plug it straight in. If you've got all your games on a smart card, it's a lot easier just to take the card out, put it in your pocket and take it over to your friend's house than it is to lug your Amiga down there. We have a smart card slot in the A600 and the A1200, and we'll continue to use them because we believe that they will be the cheapest and easiest way to upgrade your machine.



How long will it take for smart cards to become the accepted medium for games?

Well, you'll never see a publisher bring out a smart card with a game on. What you'll see is the guy at home storing his game on the smart card, just as if it was hard disk installable. It's a hard disk no bigger than a credit card - this can be done now, and it's purely a cost situation before it becomes mass market. I think maybe six to eight months. But the only format that will survive so far as games publishing and purchasing is concerned will be CD.

And how long before we start seeing dedicated A1200 games in any volume? Will we not have the old 'chicken and egg' situation where publishers wait for people to buy the machine before publishing, and vice versa?

Yes and no. That would be true if the machine hadn't already been such a significant success. The Amiga community is already upgrading in terrific numbers. I was speaking to Tom Watson on Renegade recently and he was telling me about the number of people contacting him who want A1200 versions of their games. If you read what the publishers say in the magazines, you'll see that the majority of them are bringing out A1200 versions or games with special 1200 levels. If you look at Soccer Kid, the new one from Krisalis due out in Easter, which is supposed to be the Zool of next year, that's going to have an A1200 level. They realise that they don't have to wait for the A1200 to be a success - it already is a success.

Enhanced versions and extra levels are one thing, though. Software dedicated to using the machine to its full potential is quite another.

There's development time to be considered. We'll probably see the first dedicated software around Easter, and there will be a number of games there appearing on the A1200 that just won't be able to appear on the A500/600 because of what they are. Don't forget that to develop a game, you're talking about anything between eight and eighteen months. And we only gave publishers machines just before Christmas, which is their busiest time. So I think it's unrealistic to expect any dedicated software before Easter.

What are your hopes for the A1200 over the next year or so?

Well, I think I said in a recent article 300,000 sales in 1993. If we achieve that, I'll be happy with the machine. What I believe is that we may even overachieve that because of the number of people upgrading. It's already sold 45,000 units, which is nearly double what we expected. I'm just hoping for lots and lots of sales. People were coming up to me saying "Look, I'm thinking about upgrading, but some of my old games may not work". And I just say to them "Once you've started playing A1200 games, you'll never want to go back to the 500". And that's the truth.

What about the mass of existing A500/600 users? If those machines take a back seat behind the A1200, will we still see new software appearing?

We've sat down with all the major publishers and told them our plans, and suggested that they should carry on with A500/600 publishing. And not one of them said they won't. Don't forget that even in we don't sell one A600 next year, there are still something like 1.5 million A500/600 users out there, and a publisher is just not going to walk away from that. You'll continue to see A500/600 games at least for another eighteen months, and probably even further. People shouldn't be worried that the development community is going to walk away. They're still making money.



Some developers and publishers have said they don't think they're receiving enough development support from Commodore for the A1200. Do you think you're doing enough to stimulate software growth for the machine?

It depends who you're talking to. In England we have the best development community in the world, and there are hundreds of them. You can't effectively support every developer to the hilt, so what we've done is look at giving tremendous support to a limited number, and then standard support to the rest. I have support people who work eight hours a day, five days a week supporting the developers. We have on-line support facilities to the US offices. If publishers or developers don't want to pay £100-200 a year to get those facilities, or if they don't want to sign a non-disclosure agreement, then I can't help them. But I would have thought that £4 a week is a pretty good deal to get the support they want.

There have been some complaints from the Amiga-buying public about the arrival of the new machine. Having just spent £300-400 on an A600, they're then annoyed to see a superior machine arrive for the same price without warning. How do you react to that?

I don't do any different to what most other manufacturers do, not just in the computer arena but in the motor industry and elsewhere. New models and specs are coming out all the time. We wanted to keep quiet about the A1200 for a number of reasons, one of which was that too often in the past computer manufacturers have been blamed for announcing machines which have never arrived, or have arrived late. You get so much bad press for that that it's just not worth it.

The other thing is that we are a commerical company. I'd like to be paid next month and so would my staff. If I announce a product too far in advance and it becomes delayed and people stop buying the existing machines because they're waiting for the new model then who pays the wages? We're not a charity, and we've got to be commercially aware about what we're doing. We're not here to try to trick people or upset or embarass them, but we have to make money.

If I'd announced the A1200 in October and not shipped it until March, I might be on the dole now.

Atari went about it differently with the Falcon because it didn't matter to them because they couldn't lose any ST sales. They weren't making any ST sales! But when I plan to sell a couple of hundred thousand A600s at Christmas, if I hadn't sold those, it would have had a tremendous effect on the company.

What about the Atari Falcon?
The last I heard there were a limited few in the UK, but I haven't seen or heard of anyone who's got one yet. They were talking about mass shipments around Easter. I don't know.

How do you feel about that machine? It's superior to the A1200 in some technical respects, isn't it?
It sounds better, but that's it.

Do you see some kind of battle emerging, like the Amiga and ST during the late eighties?
No, to be successful in this market you need a number of things. You obviously need a good machine, but that's not everything. You also need a very aggressive price and, probably more importantly, you need support. Publishers won't support a machine if they don't believe it will be successful.

I think if you did a straw poll of the industry, you'd find that not many publishers in the UK, certainly not the top publishers, are endeared to Atari as they are to the Amiga. They've got a machine which is pretty good, the price is questionable at the moment - they've only got a 1Mb machine at £499, which for 32-bit games is just not good enough, quite frankly. And even if they address that, what software is there going to be for it? Are you going to see Street Fighter II or Zool or Lemmings 2? I don't know.

Their success on the ST hasn't been what is should have been over the last couple of years, so people have been dropping out of the Atari market rather than trying to support them. I wish them well because competition is good for the market, but I don't see it as a serious threat to the A1200.

Why are Amiga prices rising?
(Points to currency exchange rates on TV.) There. 154.62 dollars to the pound. People think we're an American company, but we're not. We're a Bahamian company, which is very nice for people who can sit on the beach there. But our shares are on the New York stock exchange and we do all our dealing in dollars. I know that it's boring for some of the readers, but it does have an effect on the real world. If the pound weakens against the dollar, that means companies like Commodore aren't making the margin they need to survive, so there's only a couple of things you can do.

You can hope to sell a lot more machines, but you can only really do that if you drop the price, or you have to put the price up and hope to sell as many as you can. It's purely a dollar situation, and I've also said that when the pound strengthens against the dollar again, we'll readdress the prices.

In real terms, what Commodore has lost in dollar/pound currency is $19 million in the last twelve weeks. That's a big chunk of money for anybody and we can't afford that. We have to survive, we have to be here in 1993 - and it's not just us. I know that Sega and Nintendo are also reviewing their prices now. They haven't announced anything, but I'll be very surprised if they don't announce a price increase after January.



How is the Amiga faring in the USA at the moment? It seems to be on the slide, with a lot of big companies like Lucasfilm and Sierra losing interest.
The Amiga as a games machine has been singularly unsuccessful in the US, and anybody who said any different would be crazy. The A3000/4000 machines have been incredibly successful, but we haven't had much luck with the A500/600. We're hoping that the A1200 will address that, and we can start building up a reasonable market there. But people like Lucasfilm who maybe are looking at their home market, which is America, don't see many Amiga gamesplayers and say "Well, we won't develop for it". But let's not forget that 85% of Commodore's business is in Europe, and so far as the games market is Europe is concerned, we are incredibly strong. Anyone who ignores the European market does so at their peril. They're crazy.

The whole CD-ROM/CDTV thing still seems limited as a games medium, judging by what's been seen so far. Are you confident it will take off soon?
There's a number of products coming out in the March timeframe that have been under development for two years now. One is Microcosm from Psygnosis, which is absolutely startling, and Amiga owners will only be able to play if they have a CD drive of some description. CD drives will only take off when they show a benefit. Why should people buy a CD drive if they can play the same games on floppy?

What we've got to do is get the "Wow" factor in there, and that's what products like Microcosm will bring to the market. It's a tremendous game, and when it comes out it will knock people's socks off. The bolt-on CD drive for the A500 is out there, and the CD drives for the A600/1200 are planned, and you'll see those in 1993, but it's only hardware. We need killer pieces of software to make people buy them. Once it starts rolling it's like a snowball, it gathers momentum.

You sometimes only need a couple of pieces of software to get the ball rolling. Games like F/A-18 Interceptor and Defender Of The Crown sold thousands of A500s in the early days. That's right. I remember showing Defender Of The Crown at exhibitions, and people thought we were hiding a video recorder under the desk! They couldn't believe it. Shadow Of The Beast was another one. It doesn't take much but they have to be there, and at the moment the CD software that's already out has been less than impressive, and certainly doesn't justify purchasing a CD drive. But the software you'll start seeing in about three months' time will definitely justify it.

Do you see the Psygnosis approach as the way forward for CD games?
Yes, I think so. They've put an awful lot of money, time and effort into the CD arena because they know that CD is going to take off in a big way, and they're going to be at the forefront. It's going to take other publishers a significant amount of time and money to catch up with Psygnosis.

So when will we really see the Amiga CD explosion?
It's going to start escalating quite dramatically. People are already selling more CDTVs in a week in 1992 than they sold in a month in 1991. The curve is going up, there's no question.

And where does that leave floppy disks?
People will continue to develop on floppy, but they probably won't put as much effort or money in as they have done previously. Quite frankly, if you release a game on Amiga, it's seen as being pretty successful if it sells around 40,000 units. But compared to the installed base, that's pathetic. And the reason is because of piracy. People think it's clever and smart to pirate software, but what they're doing is restricting the ability of publishers to bring out very good quality games. But it's going to be damned difficult to pirate CDs.

WIN! A TRIP TO EMMERDALE FARM!





You may not have heard much about the loveable Creepers just yet but rest assured that they could be the biggest gaming phenomenon since the last one. In an effort to increase public awareness Psygnosis has decided to award a trip to the real Emmerdale Farm for the lucky winner of this competition, plus ten copies of the game for the runners-up, the generous blighters!.

So why Emmerdale Farm, then? Well, the game is based around the exploits of a number of Creepers who need to be guided safely to their pots where they will turn into butterflies - a transformation regarded by most 'in the know' as one of the most amazing and unique in nature. And you should see my mum when she sits down to watch the latest episode of the farmyard soap. Usually she's a kind, considerate woman who'll do anything for her children but come 7.00 pm on a Tuesday and Thursday she turns into a violent creature who snaps if anybody dares to breathe as she's following the plot based around Kim, Carol Frank, Kathy and some other people, probably.

So, the lucky winner (and a friend) will be whisked up to the real Emmerdale - not to meet the cast or anything as boring as that - but to see first hand where Amos and the gang act and stuff like that. There'll also be the opportunity to catch your own crawly creepers but that's up to you.

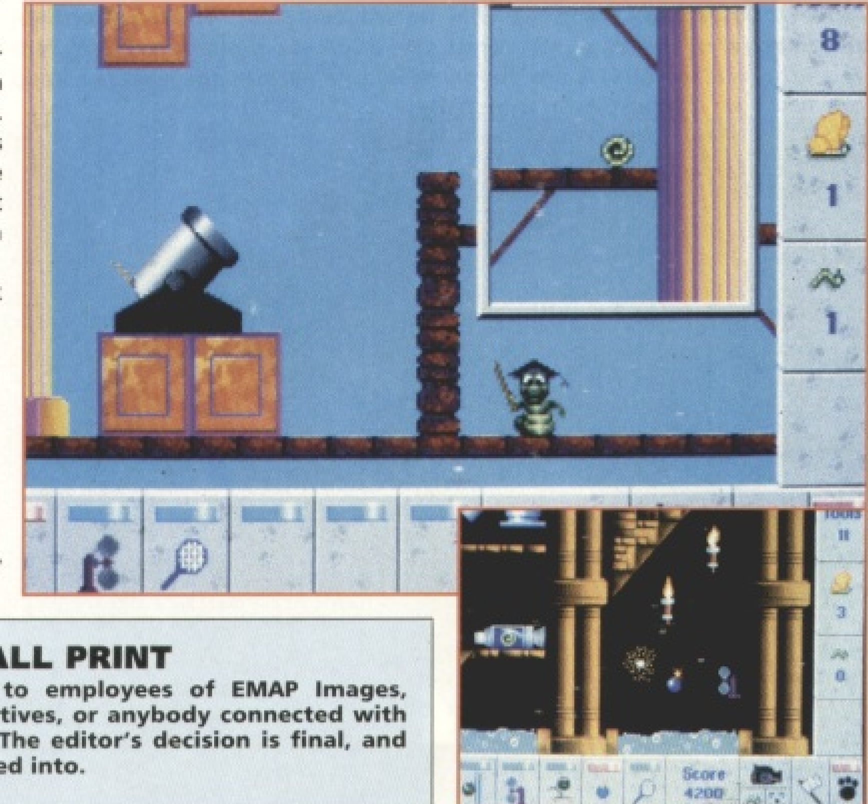
No competition would be complete without some form of question or puzzle and this one's no different. Basically, all you need to do is tell us is what is the proper name for the cocoons that caterpillars inhabit while they metamorphose onto a beautiful butterfly?

Answers on a postcard or the back of a sealed envelope please to:

Jeepers Creepers Compo,
THE ONE,
Priory Court,
30-32 Farringdon Lane,
London EC1R 3AU,

to arrive no later than 28th February 1993.

PLUS! Ten Copies of Creepers from Psygnosis!



THE SMALL PRINT

This competition is not open to employees of EMAP Images, Psygnosis, their friends and relatives, or anybody connected with Yorkshire TV - especially Amos. The editor's decision is final, and no correspondence will be entered into.

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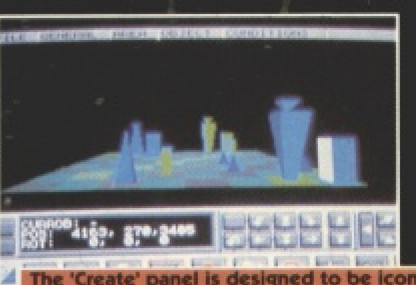
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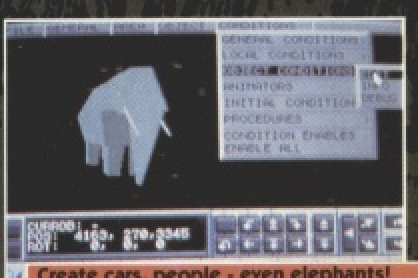
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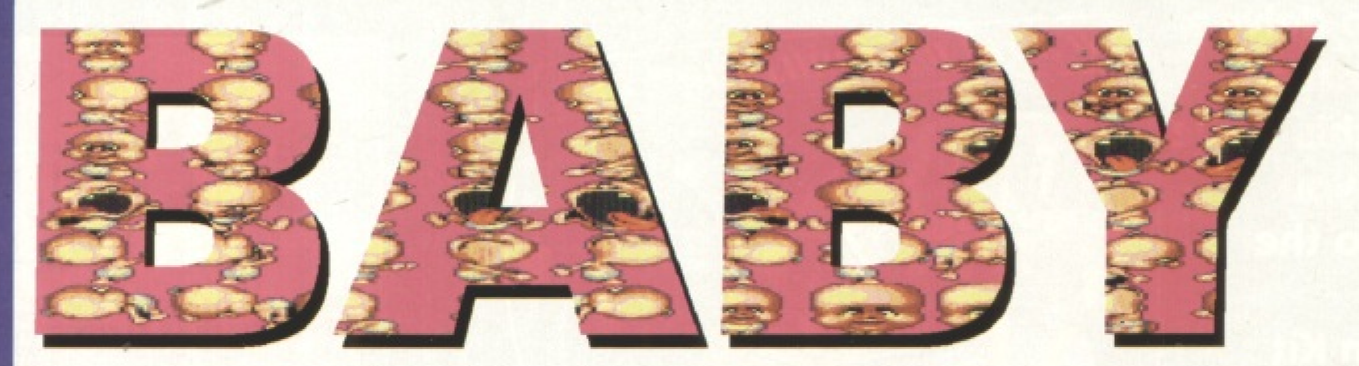
DOMARK

Designed and Programmed by Incentive Software
 IBM PC Screenshots
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ROCK ME



Chuck Rock is BACK! Actually, he's been kidnapped by Brick Jagger (snigger!) and it's up to his infant son to save him. Gary Whitta takes a look at the development of the game that time almost forgot.

Who would have thought that a gormless granite-jawed troglodyte would ever hit the big-time in the software world? And no, we're not talking about Andy Crane. Chock Rock, Core Design's prehistoric platform hero who owes more than a little to the likes of Fred Flintstone was the surprise hit of 1991. Not only did the game propel Core into the industry big leagues, but it also made a star of the eponymous hero, who has since gone on to take Sega and Nintendo formats by storm - the gaming equivalent of going from daytime TV to starring in the Summer's big Hollywood blockbuster. And, just like in Hollywood, a sequel was a dead cert as soon as the game hit the top of the charts.

But Chuck Rock II, subtitled Son of Chuck for rather obvious reasons, has been a long time in coming. Conceived even before the original game was complete and started proper in November of 1991, the project was put on hold for six weeks so the team could work on a more pressing CD project for the Megadrive. It wasn't until September last year that designer Bob Churchill, programmer Dan Scott and the rest of the team were able to come back to Chuck and resume the game full-time. But, as Bob explains, the wait has been worth it. "We decided to do a sequel because Chuck Rock was very successful for us and we really enjoyed creating the game," he says. "We approached Chuck II with even more enthusiasm than Chuck Rock because when we were creating the original we were constantly thinking of new ideas."

For the record - Son of Chuck picks up the story 18 months after the

PROJECT: Chuck Rock II: Son of Chuck
PUBLISHER: Core Design
DEVELOPER: The Chuck Team
Bob Churchill (Game & Map Design)
Dan Scott (Programmer)
Lee Pullen, Richard Morton (Graphics)
Martin Iveson (Music & Sound)
INITIATED: November 1991
RELEASE: Spring 1993

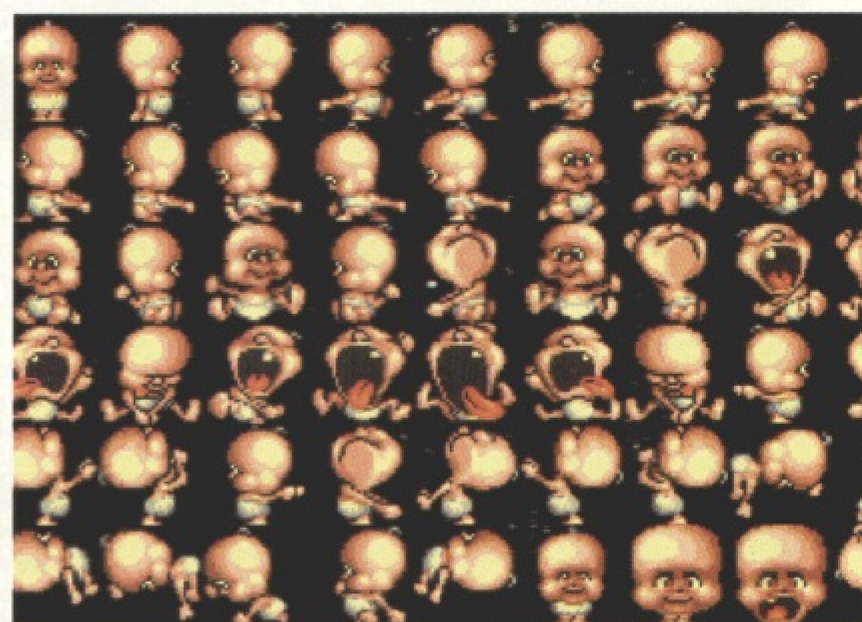




(Above and left) Chuck Rock II features some of the biggest sprites the Amiga has ever seen, including these gargantuan dinos from World One.

(Below) Chuck Jnr is his many guises - "We just fell in love with him" says Bob Churchill.







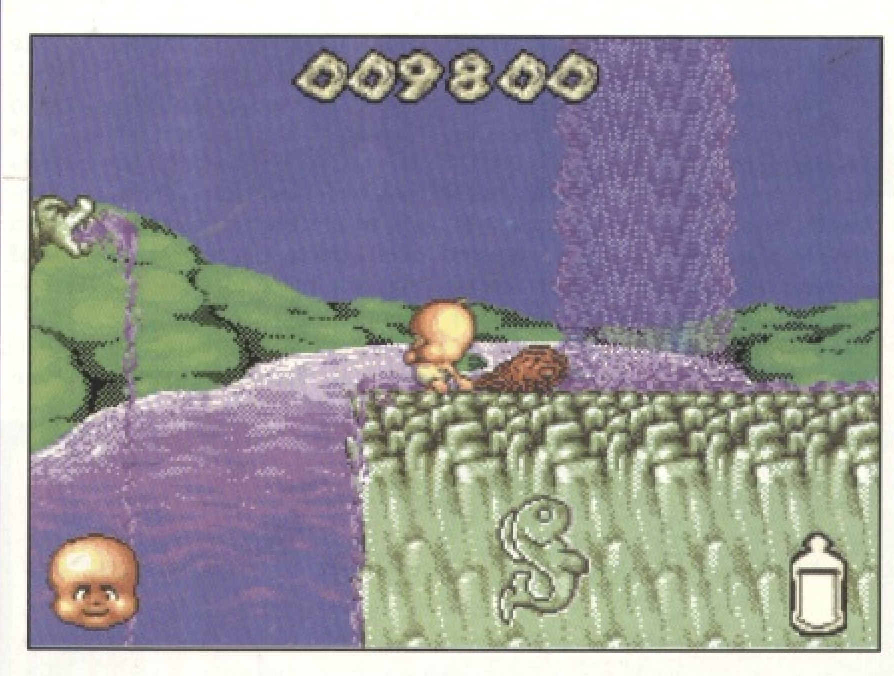
original, in which Chuck Rock rescued his missus from the evil Gary Gritter. Now, with the Rock family happily reunited, Chuck and his wife have had a sprog and Chuck has started his own successful car company. However, rival motor boss Brick Jagger (top man at Datstone cars) is taking a dim view of Chuck's recent success. So much so that he's kidnapped his rival and demanded that he signs his company over to him. The swine.

But little Chuck Jnr isn't going to stand for this. Grabbing his dad's outsized club and heading for the Datstone plant, little Chuckie plans to bash Brick's bonce and right a few wrongs in these turbulent times before time began. What all this boils down to is basically more of the same scrolling platform-based monster bashing that delighted so many in Chuck Rock - why change a winning formula, after all? "We have as much freedom as we want when developing a game," says Bob, "but when you do a sequel, you have to keep a lot of the original ideas which made the first game successful." That's not to say that Chuck II is devoid of originality - there's a host of new features spread out across the five worlds, including inter-level sub games to complement the inevitable guardians, some karate-style club-swinging abilities for the new nappy-wearing hero (he can balance on the top of the stone weapon to avoid stampedes and rolling boulders etc) and oodles of never-before-seen technical trickery. With the benefit of hindsight, the team has also been able to rectify or trash some of the original's less successful elements.

And, of course, there's a new character. Instead of the rather freakish-

(Above left) Chuck Jnr can balance on his daddy's club (ooer) in order to avoid certain baddies - it won't help him much against this giant bird, however.

(Above) Though the prehistoric theme is carried throughout the game, each World has a different look - World Two has more a rural feel to it, for example, with pretty flowers for all to see.



looking caveman Chuck in the original, we now have a considerably cuter (but still rather odd-looking) baby in a prehistoric nappy and a tendency to throw a tantrum if he gets hit by a nasty. "We talked about the concept of Chuck Junior and then Lee went away and drew the character which we all fell in love with immediately," explains Bob. "We then just worked out a story for Junior to be born into the Rock family." The infant character has led to some inevitable similarities with that other caveman baby game, the rather good BC Kid, but Bob's not bothered. "Obviously I think Chuck II is better than BC Kid. It's a nice game, but I just think it's dated."

Although Chuck II isn't going to break new ground gameplaywise, the team are confident that the new game represents a significant technical improvement over its illustrious predecessor. "The graphics for Chuck II are more colourful and have a lot more humour in them," says graphic artist Lee Pullen. "We were given more time for Chuck II so I had more time to get the graphics right and put more character in the sprites. One of the main problems was coming up with new ideas that weren't used in the first. Time is always a constant problem when trying to originate new material."

Programmer Dan Scott is very proud of what's been achieved from a technical point of view during the development of Son of Chuck. For all the Tefal-heads and statistics fans out there, the game boasts 50 frames per second scrolling (that's as smooth as it gets) featuring three layers of parallax, some of the biggest animated monsters ever seen in a computer game (one of them is made up of eleven individual and very big sprites), 128k of baddies per level and even a sprite-scaling routine for the title screen. "We feel that Chuck II is technically far superior to the original," he says. "It has larger sprites, more colours, more complex and ingenious alien routines. Basically, we are pushing the Amiga to its limits with this type of game!" So, with all this technical trickery going on, what's been the hardest part of the project for the team so far? "For me, it's all the bloody cups of tea I have to make to create new ideas to put into a platform game," says Bob jokingly. "After doing so many it gets quite difficult to make it different. Saying that, though, it's very enjoyable and it's so groovy to see your game on screen. It's always a challenge creating a game, but it's slightly more difficult if it's a sequel because people expect more and always compare it to the original game."

The Amiga gaming world may have had to wait quite a while for the arrival of Core and Chuck's new baby, but if the evidence on these pages is anything to go by, Chuck II (the final title is still to be decided, by the way) may just well be worth the wait. The project is scheduled to finish in March after almost two years of work, and Son of Chuck/Chuck Rock 2/Chuck Jnr/whatever should be hitting shelves the month after that - one of the first big blockbusters of the Spring and, indeed, 1993 perhaps? Well, we'll have to wait until then to see if Chuck Jnr can follow in his daddy's chart-topping footsteps...

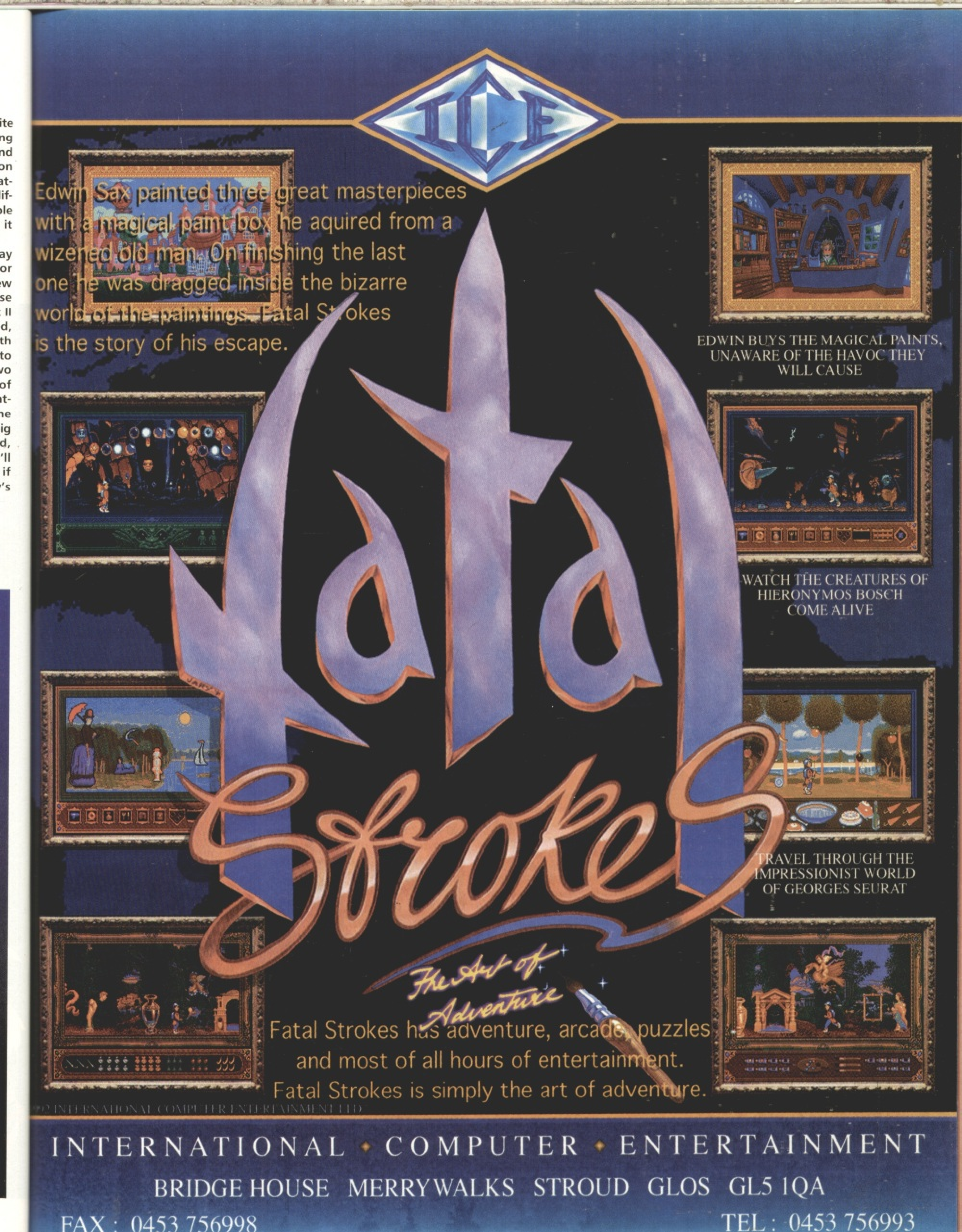






(Left from top to bottom) A selection of Lee Pullen's cutesy sprites from the various levels of Chuck II - note the flamethrower men from the volcanic world.

(Left) Little Chuck Jnr throws a tantrum if he's hit by a nasty, and signals the end of each life by bawling his eyes out. The little love.


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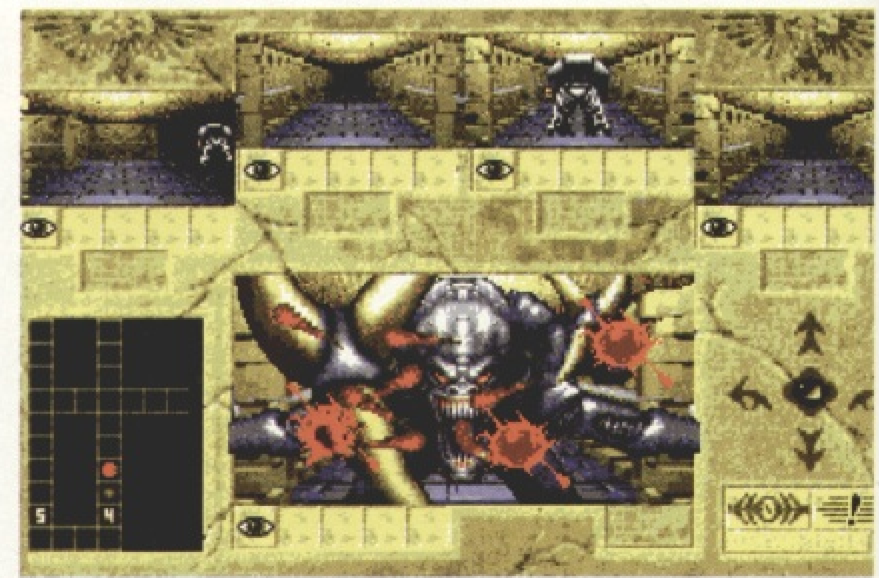
Incredible HULK

As EA's conversion of Games Workshop's Space Hulk boardgame nears completion, David Upchurch beams aboard the coding vessel to see how the programmers are dealing with the hordes of alien creatures that populate the strange alien world...

As enjoyable as Gremlin's conversions of the boardgames Hero Quest and Space Crusade were, the benefits of having the games immortalised in binary were few and far between. Sure, you no longer risked breaking or losing the pieces and you could play alone against the computer, but they were fairly uninspired translations. Space Hulk, however, looks set to be very different. Like Hero Quest and Space Crusade, Space Hulk was designed by gaming gurus Games Workshop, but this time it's Electronic Arts handling the PC and Amiga conversion duties.

Space Hulk's backdrop is much darker and more detailed than either Quest's or Crusade's. It's very Gothic in atmosphere, sort of like the Spanish Inquisition meets Aliens. As Nick Wilson, the man in charge of programming this boardgame-to-computer conversion, succinctly puts it, it's where "there's all this high-tech stuff but nobody's quite sure what it is or what it does."

Nick got involved with the Space Hulk project shortly after finishing programming work on EA's Strike Fleet, a sea-based action/wargame that appeared just over a year ago. "Electronic Arts had negotiated the rights from Games Workshop to I don't know how many different games, of which Space Hulk was one. They showed me the boardgame and said 'What do you think, Nick?'. When they told me it was going to be converted into a computer game I thought, well, this is just going to be a complete joke, you know? Computer games and boardgames are two completely different things.

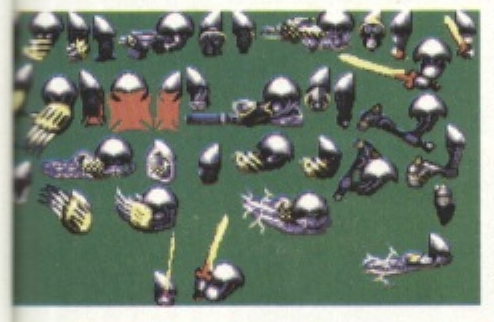


The Marines, aliens, laser bolts and corridor 'furniture' are all generated from sprites scaled in real time. To keep the detail of the images high the sprites are drawn as large as possible then scaled down, never up. Should an alien attack, a new set of even more detailed graphics are used to gory effect!



PROJECT: Space Hulk
PUBLISHER:
Electronic Arts
DEVELOPER:
Nick Wilson (Programming)
Andy Jones (Graphics)
Tim White (Graphics)
Jason Whitely (Sound)
INITIATED:
Summer 1991
RELEASE: Easter 1992





"Anyway, I played the boardgame and I was really surprised. I'm not normally a big fan of Dungeons & Dragons-style games. I thought Space Hulk was just going to be lots of rolling dice and all sorts of strange, complicated rules but as it turned out it was a good, fun, strategy game to play. I showed it to all my friends and everyone got really hooked on it. I know it sounds corny but I wouldn't have accepted the project unless I enjoyed the game.

"We had various meetings up at Electronic Arts, deciding whether or not to do a straight copy of the boardgame. That's more or less what Gremlin did with Space Crusade - they've done a nice job and it's well polished but you don't benefit hugely from it being on computer. So we decided we'd have to enhance the game to take advantage of the fact that it is actually on computer."

Although the computer game can only be played by one person (in the boardgame a second player takes on the role of the aliens and carries out general 'games master' duties), the two versions have the same basic structure. The player is given a mission and a limited number of Marines with which to carry it out, each of whom can be tooled up as you see fit from a wide range of weapons. Each mission is set inside a Space Hulk, vast starships teeming with aliens, and, once aboard, the player gives out orders to each marine, moving them through the decaying corridors and attacking any xenomorphs they may encounter.

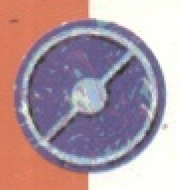
The boardgame was played using plastic figures moved around on floortiles arranged as the players explore the various Hulk layouts. The computer version, on the other hand, uses a very different approach. Although the player gives his orders on a 2D 'strategy map', when they're carried out the view switches to impressive 3D that updates smoothly as the Marines clank about. "It's a bit more exciting than the boardgame in the sense that it all happens there and then," thinks Nick. "You get a lot of atmosphere and a real feeling of 'being there'."

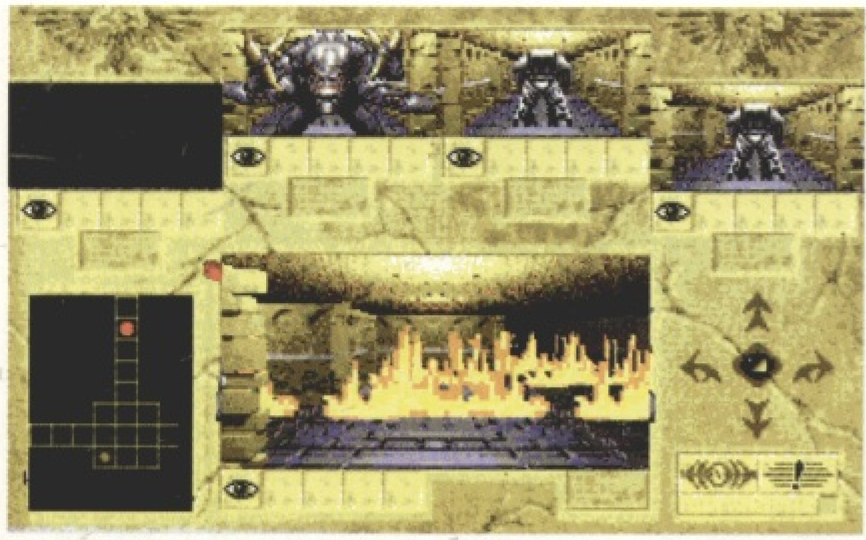
Nick wrote most of Space Hulk's code first on the PC, then converted it across onto the Amiga. "I sort of cheated doing the Amiga ver-

FREEZE!

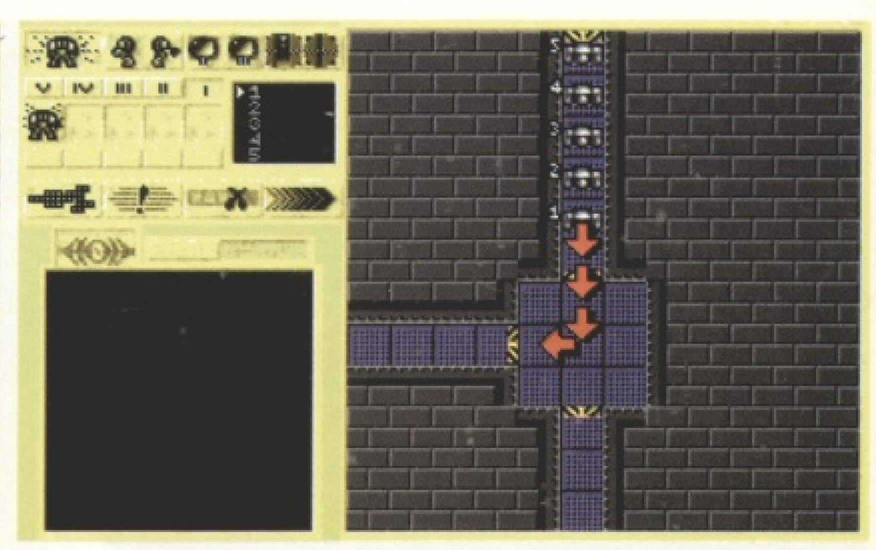
Although the way the two games are presented differs greatly, the game mechanics are identical, bar one major respect: "We haven't really made any changes to the rules, but the game's no longer 'turn based'," explains Nick. "You don't have your four squares of movement and then the aliens move their six squares. Instead it's played in something called 'Freezetime'. You can pause the game and give orders to all your marines, but you only have a certain amount of time that you can freeze the game for.

"While the game's paused that time ticks away, but the longer you play in real time the more your 'Freezetime' builds up. Basically the longer you 'brave it' in real time, the longer you get later on to take a step back and review the situation. It sounds a bit complicated and tricky, but it actually works really well."





The player gives orders to his Marines on this 2D map using a simple point-n'-click interface. Marines can be told to move, or to move then stand guard, or to move and shoot at any aliens they encounter on the way. It's a quick and easy system to use - which is just as well, as when you come here you start using up all that hard-earned Freezetime.



Remember Aliens? The viewpoints of the Marines as they move and fight are shown on these monitor screens. The player can directly supersede the orders of the Marine whose view is shown in the big monitor using an 'Eye of the Beholder'-style icon-control system. The player can swap to control another Marine at any time so he can always be where the action is.

"I thought Space Hulk was just going to be lots of rolling dice and all sorts of strange, complicated rules but as it turned out it was a good, fun, strategy game to play."
Nick Wilson,
Space Hulk programmer.

sion," confesses Nick. "I wrote a program to convert the PC program (which is nearly done) and I sat back and it did it all for me. I know it sounds like a joke but about 90% of the Amiga version I haven't touched - it was all done by the computer! I know that any programmers reading this are going to put their fingers down the back of their throats because they'd assume that it'd come up with pretty rubbish code at the end of the day. Obviously I realised that it wouldn't come up with fully-optimised code and so my converter flags any areas that aren't very well optimised so that I can look at them later."

"Everything that writes onto the screen I have had to redo completely to use the blitter, but all the game logic stuff I ran through my converter. I'm sure that if I looked at the timings I could probably get it running another 20% faster if I went through and optimised it. But things like the 'Game over?' check are only called occasionally so what's a fraction of a second every few seconds?"

"I'm pleased with how Space Hulk looks on Amiga," Nick concludes. "I thought we were going to have to make some quite severe compromises but most of the stuff has ported across well. At the moment the screen updates at about four frames per second on Amiga. It's acceptable, but saying that the Amiga hasn't been optimised yet - it's just a running testbed. For instance, I haven't set up any blitter interrupts yet, so whenever it's 'blitting' stuff onto the screen the CPU is just waiting. So it will go faster."

Space Hulk is showing a great deal of promise, and could well be the first game to really emulate Aliens-style tension on computer. But the proof of the pudding is, as they say, in the eating, so look out for the review later in the year.

FUTURE WARS

Confused? Then sit back and enjoy this beginner's guide to life in the 40,000th Century...

THE IMPERIUM

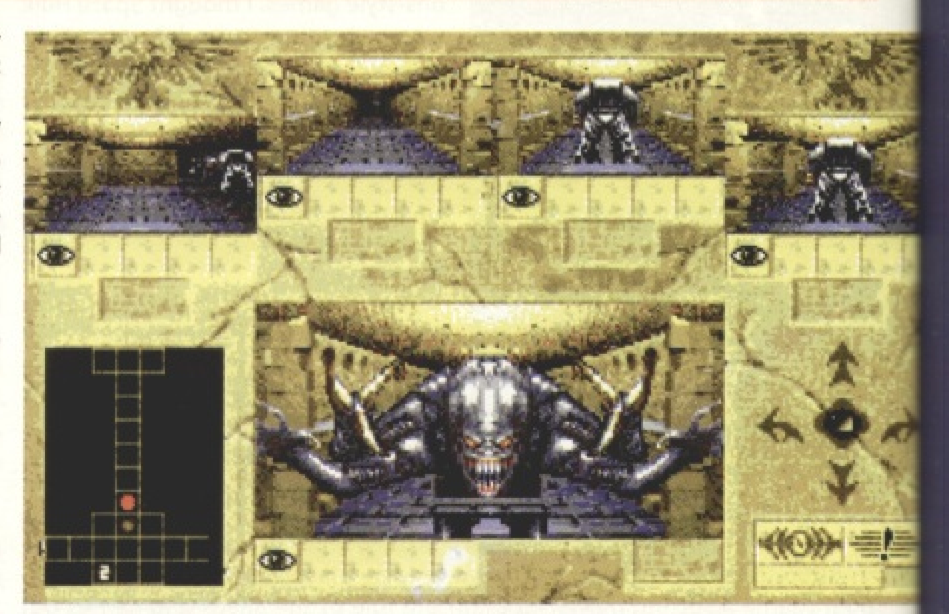
The future according to Games Workshop is a dark time, when the opposing forces of Order and Chaos are locked in a war for dominance waged across the cosmos. The far-flung forces of mankind are united under the banner of the Imperium, a bastion of Order. It's a harsh and oppressive regime, ruled by an immortal Emperor who is worshipped by his people as a god. Aliens, the foul minions of Chaos, are an abomination, to be put to the sword by ever-vigilant Inquisitors.

THE SPACE MARINES

The warriors of the Imperium are the Space Marines, merciless killers recruited from the darkest corners of the galaxy. Each Marine belongs to a Chapter, each of which has its own fortress-monastery base and set of traditions and rituals. There is no life for a Marine outside his Chapter; between battles they spend their time training and meditating. Bio-mechanically enhanced and equipped out with armoured exoskeletons and awesome firepower, it is their sacred honour to defend the Imperium from the alien legions of Chaos at any cost.

SPACE HULKS

Travel between planets is made possible by the existence of warpspace, a bizarre other-dimension accessed by warpgates. Many ships have gone missing in warpspace. It has been known for the forces of Chaos to hijack these drifting wrecks and use their random movements to make surprise attacks on human settlements. Sometimes ships are bolted together to form vast, labyrinthian vessels known as Space Hulks. Such vessels, capable of transporting hordes of aliens, pose a severe threat to the Imperium. This is, of course, where the Space Marines come in...



The corridor wall graphics were generated using the Real3D ray-tracing package on an Amiga fitted with a 24-bit graphics card. These graphics were then reduced to 256 colours for the PC and then 32 colours for the Amiga. Nick's unsure whether there will be a Space Hulk enhanced for the A1200. "It's possible we could a 256-colour version but it's down to EA really and whether they want to do it," he explains.



Thalion are releasing some top-notch software at the moment. Not content with producing the best motorcycle simulation ever and what's set to be one of the finest hack-'n-slash games in the form of their forthcoming Lionheart (which is nearing completion as we speak), they've now turned their attention to the RPG genre. Simon Byron journeys into the mysterious world they're currently calling Ambermoon...

OVER THE

A few months ago, David Upchurch cast his eye over Thalion's RPG 'Amberstar' and, after a few days of deliberation, declared that "the 3D 'bits' [Dave always writes with such passion] are by-and-large redundant" and that "with a little more design forethought it might have appealed to everyone." Many agreed that, although it was a fine game, it was missing that certain spark that elevates a game to classic status.

But Thalion have acknowledged the criticisms and are, as we speak, eagerly beavering away on the second game in the 'Amber' trilogy. Legends of Valour and Eye of the Beholder 2 are generally regarded as the best Role Players to date but they are two quite different games to play. Legends of Valour is a smooth 3D extravaganza with texture mapping and jiggery-pokery like that whilst Beholder 2 is a more traditional RPG with complex puzzles and huge, sprawling mazes.

What would happen if you mixed the two together, added a top-down 2D section and a huge game to boot? Well, Thalion know and they're about to share the secret with you, the discerning punter. I spoke to Erik Simon, the producer of Ambermoon, or, as he describes it, "the guy who kicks the programmers' butts and ensures the game is released on time", to find out exactly how they tend to claim the RPG Throne for themselves.



All the torches that hang from the dungeon walls are realistically animated (there'd be no point in unrealistically animating them, after all). They don't produce their own separate light source (i.e. things don't get lighter when you walk up to them) but they can still be picked up to be used later on in the game when your party have no light left.



There are literally thousands of pillars in the many dungeons of Ambermoon which restrict the party's view so that monsters can jump from behind and surprise the party. Because the game is still being finished there are currently no monsters roaming the dungeons but Erik promises us that they will all look pretty spectacular.

The major, and most noticeable, improvement over Amberstar is the dungeon section. In the original game, this) was presented in the Beholder style. You know, blocky sections moving in jerky steps to give the (un)realistic impression of movement. Well, forget all that because now you'll be able to travel gracefully around a gloomy dungeon à la Legends of Valour, as Erik explains. "Believe it or not - you better do, I'm two metres tall - but we have had a bitmap-polygon routine at Thalion for over two years now. As we've been involved in various projects we've not had the opportunity to implement this technique but now the chance has finally arisen. Our revolutionary realtime texture mapping system gives you the possibility to move around freely in three-dimensional dungeons and cities. It really gives you much more of that 'I'm really there' feeling. It thrills us to be doing things on the 16-bit machines that are normally impossible to do."

This texture mapping business sounds very interesting, but what's it all about? "Generally speaking, it's

SEE THE WORLD(S)!
The game isn't spent entirely inside the gloomy dungeons and on many occasions the heroic party will find themselves in a number of unusual and varying locations. The screen changes from the dazzling 3D world to this top-down view from which you control your party as a whole. The world maps are four times bigger than the ones found in Amberstar, making the total surface area 800 x 800 squares large. The worlds differ greatly, as shown here, and the unusual graphical styles ensure that the game looks aesthetically appealing and far removed from the run-of-the-mill RPGs.





PROJECT: Ambermoon
PUBLISHER: Thalion Software
DEVELOPERS: In-House
Erik Simons (Producer, 2D World Maps Design)
Jurie Horneman (Programming)
Karsten Koper (Design)
Matthias Steinwachs (Sound)
Michael Bittner (3D Bitmap Polygon Technique)
Thorsten Mutschall (Graphics)
Monika Krawinkel (Graphics)
INITIATED: April 1992



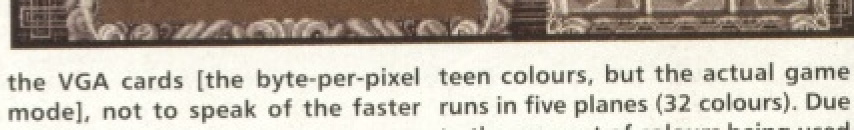
(Above) As a solid ceiling and floor would take up more CPU time and slow the game down, Thalion has included these vines to give the impression of height. Erik is hoping to implement a 'ceiling and floor' option for A1200 or accelerator owners so they can experience an even dingier dungeon.

MOON

(Below) This massive flame is another of the objects that Thalion is using to test the way the game handles large items and so far the results are good. Tests like this give a good impression as to how the game handles large objects.

"I think Ambermoon will be the most advanced RPG available on the 16-bit machines. I really hate arrogant comments like that, but take a look at the finished game and you'll see."
Erik Simon, Ambermoon Producer.







Erik is undecided as to whether these flames will end up as an available spell or not. Their purpose for the moment is to show the programmers what happens when there are a large amount of objects on screen at the same time and Erik is pleased with the results so far as the frame rate is currently remaining fairly constant. Expect to see views like this in the finished version.

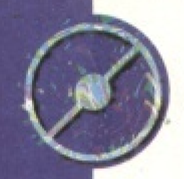
the next step in 3D games," pipes Erik. "The development has gone from wireframe to solid polygons and now on to texture mapping. Texture mapping uses the same simple calculations that most polygon games use but instead of taking a simple one-colour polygon, we take a bitmap graphic and distort it spatially so that it fits on the polygon.

"Many painting programs such as DPaint have been doing this sort of thing for years but the real problem lies with performing it in realtime with dozens of bitplane polygons. This is quite a task because you have to handle every single pixel of the object, instead of using a fast one-colour polygon routine. It's easier to do on the PC than the Amiga, due to the VGA cards [the byte-per-pixel mode], not to speak of the faster CPUs."

Speed is always an important part of a 3D game. No matter how much detail on-screen, if the game trudges along at one frame a day, the illusion of realism is lost completely. The Ambermoon dungeon is drawn using four bit-planes, which give sixteen colours, but the actual game runs in five planes (32 colours). Due to the amount of colours being used Thalion are losing 25% of the optimum speed but they feel that the advantages of having more colours to play with and the ability to smoothly fade objects to black when there is little light in the dungeon more than make up for this.

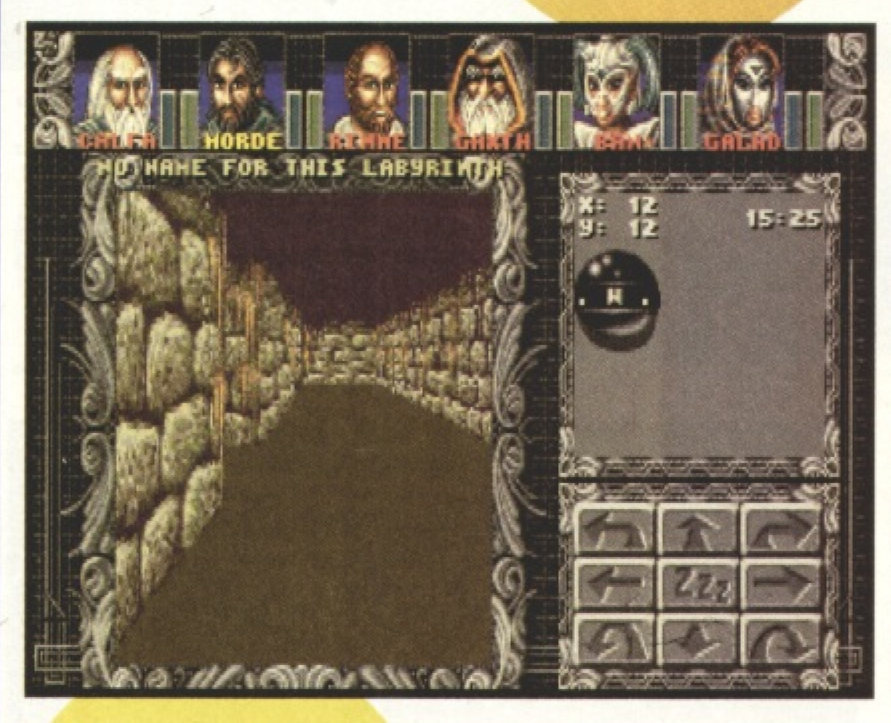






"The average speed of the dungeon section is anything between ten to five frames a second, depending on what's on screen," explains Erik. "There are special routines for turboboards which speed things up on upgraded machines. We're constantly working on optimisation, but I don't think we can make it much faster. If we have the time then maybe we'll offer an option to display textures on the floor and ceiling especially for turbo owners."

"Our revolutionary realtime texture mapping system gives you the possibility to move around freely in three-dimensional dungeons and cities. It really gives you much more of that 'I'm really there' feeling."
Erik Simon, Ambermoon Producer.





(Above) Amberstar veterans will no doubt be familiar with this character status screen. From here you can check out how well your party is bearing up and what special powers they possess.

(Left) An interesting feature of Ambermoon is the way the view changes depending on which character is currently 'active'. The view from the Dwarf is noticeably nearer the ground, making the walls appear far more daunting.

"We're looking enviously to America from time to time. These guys put maybe ten times more manpower and money in their projects because they know that they will sell enough to be in profit at the end of the day."
Erik Simon, Ambermoon Producer.

Comparisons are bound to be made between Ambermoon and Legends of Valour but Erik doesn't seem at all worried. "Although I've only seen the Amiga demo version, it failed to impress us here at Thalion, not because of the frame rate, which, to be fair, isn't that much slower than ours, but because our screen window is approximately three times bigger and still faster. We're using the same size screen for the texture mapped dungeon in Ambermoon as we used for the block dungeon in Amberstar which is why our system doesn't tend to 'crumble' distant objects as much as Legends of Valour.

"Furthermore, we seem to use bigger bitmap blocks so the pixels don't zoom into larger squares as fast. Don't get me wrong, I don't want to criticise the Legends team, they've performed, just like us, pioneering work on the Amiga. With our system, for example, it's impossible to have a 'second' storeys like in Legends, at least at the moment. Despite these technical details, you have to bear in mind that our texture mapping system is only one part of Ambermoon."

There aren't any actual sound effects in Ambermoon because they've decided to concentrated more on implementing atmospheric tunes. They are hoping to include between twenty and thirty musical pieces, composed by Berlin music student Matthias Steinwachs (who, interestingly enough, was responsible for the excellent No Second Prize music).

Ideas are constantly floating around, as Erik explains. "We always have many more ideas than we can program or paint but are unable to for one reason or another. It's not a question of the machine's limitations, it's a question of time and that, of course, means money. We're looking enviously to America from time to time. These guys put maybe ten times more manpower and money in their projects because they know that they will sell enough to be in profit at the end of the day. In fact Ambermoon is a project with which we are testing to see whether the Amiga's share is still strong enough to afford the development of high-standard software."

Erik leaves us with an unbiased (?) passing comment. "Ambermoon improves over all the other RPGs because it is the best RPG ever and I want all of you people to buy huge amounts of it," he jokes. "One of the main points in the 'Amber-philosophy' is to use both a complete 2D and 3D system. In our opinion it it's a very good way to create a whole fantasy world, instead of having just a complex dungeon system like many other RPGs.

"It combines the thrill of exploring a huge world in 2D without losing orientation, with the intense, claustrophobic atmosphere of creeping through an eerie, dimly lit dungeon, especially with this new 3D system. Interior furniture and architecture that would be too complicated to be realistically displayed in 3D can be portrayed in 2D instead. We're trying to offer the player two RPG games in one which would be able to stand alone as a game each. We feel that we are the only software house that is capable of doing this because we have the experience of Amberstar and some new development tools.

"I think Ambermoon will be the most advanced RPG available on the 16-bit machines. I really hate arrogant comments like that, but take a look at the finished game and you'll see." Brave talk indeed but it looks as if, for once, a statement like that entirely justified. You'll be able to judge for yourself when the game is released come Easter.



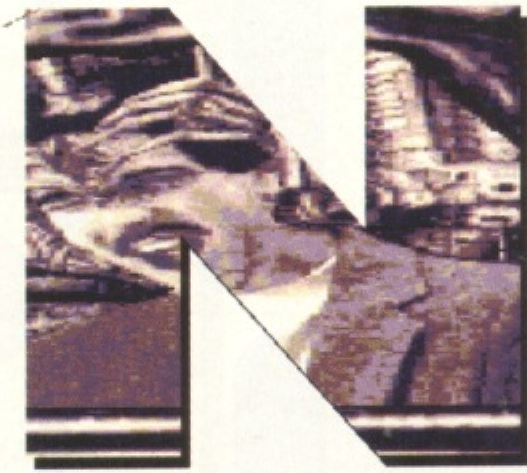
(Left) Another major improvement in Ambermoon is the player interface. If you want to transfer items from character to character then simply click the button on the object and then on the target character.

(Below) As all objects in Ambermoon have their own individual weight and each character can only carry so much gear, these chests provide the ideal opportunity to stockpile items.




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WIN! AN AMAZING SET OF H.R. GIGER BOOKS!

PLUS! Ten Copies of Darkseed and GIANT Posters!

Phew, H.R. Giger, eh? He's a bit on an oddball and no mistake. It takes a special kind of bonkers to come up with the likes of Alien and no end of other exotic (and in some case, erotic) creations. No wonder, then, that newly-formed American publisher Cyberdreams chose him and his surreal artwork as the basis for its first release, the freakish graphic adventure Darkseed.

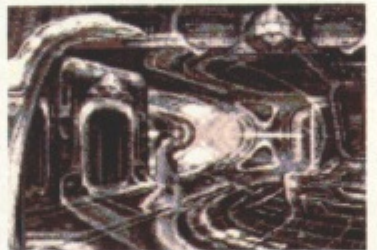
And to celebrate both the release of the game and the formation of the company's UK office (reviewed on page 44), Cyberdreams is offering, for anyone weird enough to want to, the chance to delve into the dark imagination of Hansruedi Giger himself by giving away some of the artist's best work in the form of three lavish volumes.



The prize, which would cost no small amount of cash to go out and buy, consists of the Necronomicon, New York City and, perhaps weirdest of all, ARh+, which takes the reader right through Giger's career, from his earliest sketches as a child to his work on Alien, Dune and beyond. They're not for the squeamish and certainly not for Mary Whitehouse. But they ARE a must for any fans of the surreal or the bizarre, coming as they do from the undisputed master of the art.

Due to the exclusivity of the prize, we have only one set of books to give away, but ten lucky runners-up will receive a copy of Darkseed (£35 to you in the local shops, guvnor) and a giant Darkseed poster featuring Giger artwork. So, to win this rather top prize, all you have to do is answer this one simple question: For which famous horror movie sequel did Giger design the monsters and demons?

Answers on a postcard or the back of a sealed envelope please to: At Least It's Easier Than Counting All Those Bloody Tomatoes Competition, THE ONE, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU, to arrive no later than 21st February 1993, because it's the closing date and all that.

THE SMALL PRINT
Erm... right. This competition is not open to employees of EMAP Images, Cyberdreams, their friends and relatives, and H.R. Giger - although what he'd want these books for when he's got stacks of his own is beyond us. The editor's decision is final, and no correspondence will be entered into - so remember that when you keep phoning us up to ask us whose got the most tomatoes so far.


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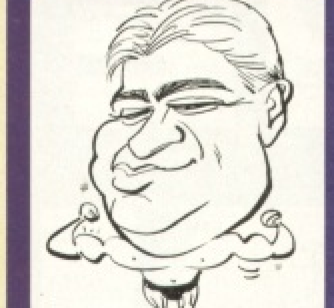
THE SCORES

All elements of our games are rated out of a possible maximum score of a hundred. But what do the scores actually mean?

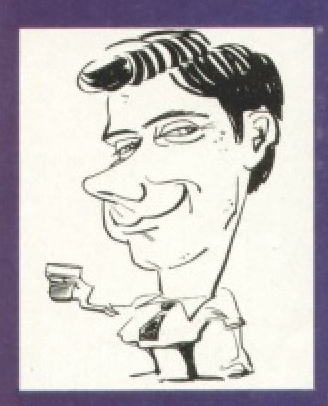
0-25	**Rubbish. Offensively low quality.**
26-49	**Below average. Not acceptable by today's standards.**
50-60	**Above average. But still plenty of room for improvement.**
61-70	**Fair to good. Lots of nice points, but in no way perfect.**
70-80	**Pretty smart. Above accepted standards.**
81-90	**Extremely good. Top notch impressiveness.**
90+	**Simply excellent. Breathtaking.**

THE OVERALL SCORE

Obviously, at the end of the day, when all is said and done, the Overall figure is the best gauge as to whether the game is any good or not. While representative of the elements, it is not an average of the other scores. That's why it isn't called THE AVERAGE.



DAVID UPCHURCH
Tight-arse Dave tried a money saving scheme just before Christmas which nearly spoiled his whole holiday. In a desperate bid to save some cash (to add to his already huge Swiss bank account), Dave attended an 'auction' in which he purchased a rather dodgy mini hi-fi from a dubious bunch of cowboys. Whilst the radio and tape worked fine, the CD player refused to function - a shame considering that was the only reason he bought the damn thing in the first place. 'Done' Dave duly sent the offending machine back but - surprise, surprise - he's heard neither hide nor hair of it since. There's a lesson for us all here.



GARY WHITTA
Gaz has been enjoying an ABBA-style popularity revival since his appearance on Gamesmaster the other week. Girls have been stopping him in the streets, begging for autographs and pretending to know him. All this fame and subsequent fortune hasn't gone to Gary's head, however, as he still remains level-headed and not-at-all power-crazed. "I think that now I'm a top TV celebrity, I should get top billing on the Reviews Intro," he quipped the other day. Oh and by the way all pupils at Danny Murphy's school - Gaz really is his cousin, so there.



SIMON BYRON
Oh Dear. Simon's relatives sodded off for Christmas so Simon found himself 'Home Alone' during the traditional family holiday. That didn't stop The One's Bournemouth boy from having an embarrassingly excellent time and he'd like to thank everyone who gave him free food and presents, especially the Downing family and Vanessa Bence who made sure that he was never at a loose end.

DON'T WORRY!
We haven't changed into one of those so-called 'trendy' computer magazines which have stupid caricatures of themselves all over the show. These were drawn at our Christmas party and we thought you'd all like to share them. Back to glorious colour photos next month!



THE CHAOS ENGINE



This, the latest from the near-legendary Bitmap Brothers, has been ages in development. Is it worth the wait? David Upchurch is the man with his finger twitching on the fire button...

Phew! How long? I can remember seeing previews of The Chaos Engine well over a year ago, promising a release date at the start of LAST year. But, as Hannibal Lecter once said, "All good things to those who wait" and there's no getting away from the fact that, some reservations aside, The Chaos Engine is a very good thing indeed.

If nothing else, the Bitmaps have come up with an original premise for their game. It describes a bizarre alternate world where Victorian aesthetics mix with futuristic technology and how Baron Fortisque, a mad inventor who works alone in a massive mansion, has built the ultimate steam-driven computer, the Chaos Engine of the title. Naturally, it soon goes berserk (wouldn't be much of a game if it quite happily just sat there solving differential equations, would it?), imprisoning its maker and creating mutant creatures which cause havoc in the surrounding towns and villages.

This is, of course, Just Not On, so two rock-hard mercenary types are hired to enter the mansion and blast the jumped-up calculator into a billion rivets or, in game terms, explore a series of scrolling mazes, blasting ugly mutants and collecting treasure and power-ups while in search of the gateway to the next zone and an ultimate blast with the Super Spectrum.

Okay, so no prizes for spotting the game's Gauntlet roots but there's far more to the game than just sticking the joystick on rapid autofire and waggling it about. Like the Bitmaps' earlier Gods, the basic formula has been enhanced with the addition of quality graphics and sound, interesting but not-too-straining puzzles and, most interestingly, a truly intelligent computer-controlled player. But does it all gel together? That's for me to know and you, shortly, to find out...





MEN AT ARMS

Defeating the mighty Chaos Engine is no job for a lone gunman, so there are always two lucky souls who enter the Baron's forbidding mansion, even in a one-player game. The, as it were, 'spare' character is controlled by the computer, and very well too. It'll seek and shoot monsters, activate nodes, pick up treasure, collect food if it's weak but leave it for you if you're weaker, and so on. However, it won't activate secret rooms or such like, so don't think you can sit back and let the computer player do all the work for you.

There are six different adventurers to pick your team from. Each, as you might expect, has his own specific strengths and weaknesses (as outlined below) and, my, what an ugly bunch of muvvas they are too...



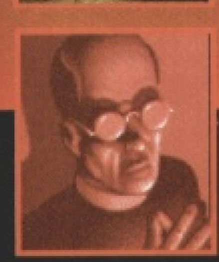
GENTLEMAN

The perfect gent at all times, his calm pipe-smoking demeanour gives no clue to the fact that he's as vicious with his wide-bore pistol as they come. Relatively nippy on his feet, he comes equipped with a handy map and can carry up to three more items.



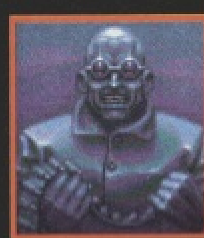
THUG

The thug is a lumbering brute of a man. While not swift to react to danger, he is capable of withstanding a heavy pounding. He's restricted to carrying a Molotov cocktail which, when unleashed, sends a ball of flame sweeping before him.



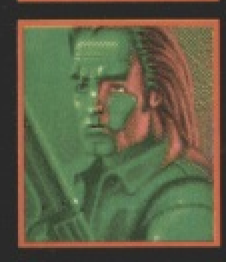
PREACHER

A life of studying holy texts has made not made the preacher the strongest of the six. However, he can carry up to four special items, initially starting out with a very handy first-aid kit, with which he can top up his energy at any time.



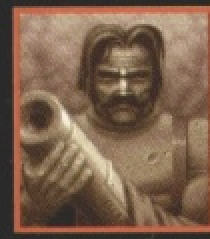
MERCENARY

While neither inordinately strong or impressively quick, the mercenary's powerful weapon and capability to carry three special items make him a good all-rounder, and a prime choice for the novice adventurer entering the mansion for the first time.



BRIGAND

The brigand is not a man lightly trifled with as he totes a powerful pump-action cannon. He starts out with a burst-spray item, which sends out a wall of high-explosive shells in all directions, and can carry another two.



NAVVY

Although a cumbersome sort, the navvy's fearsome constitution more than compensates as it makes him resilient to attack. Has only one special item, dynamite, which can also be lobbed from walkways to kill mutants and activate nodes below.



Before the game each player chooses a character from the six adventurers on offer (if one is playing then they choose a character for themselves and one for the computer). Making the right choices is essential here, as each adventurer has their own set of plus and minus points and finding a good team with complementary abilities is more important than getting two blokes with big guns and nothing else.

(Your) Your main task on each level (apart from staying alive, of course) is seeking out and destroying these monoliths, or 'nodes' as the Bitmaps call them. A specific number, indicated by a counter on the status panel, must be 'activated' (by simply shooting them) before the gate at the end of the level opens up, permitting access to the next level. Keep an eye on the counter, though - if it says you need to shoot one more node and after doing so it still says that you need another, then that means that destroying a further node may reveal a secret doorway...





There are a number of pick-ups scattered on the level floors. The most common are: weapon upgraders, giving your character greater fire power; special upgraders, which increase the number of times you can use your currently-selected special item; money, for use in the shops; and food, which ups your character's ever-dwindling energy. Watch out for other unusual objects but treat them with care - often their effects are not positive.



The game is spread over sixteen levels, split equally into four graphically distinct 'zones'; the mansion grounds, the workshops surrounding the mansion's walls, inside the mansion and finally the sewers beneath the mansion, which lead to the dreaded Chaos Engine and the players' ultimate battle. The closer you get to the Engine the weirder things get, with the monsters getting more bizarre and more vicious and the traps and puzzles more cunning.

ORDER! ORDER!

Approaching the end of the mansion's first zone, and things are beginning to get a bit sticky. What a good way of showing you the sorts of things you can expect to find when you're playing the game yourselves, eh?

These little pots increase the number of times you can use your currently-selected special weapon up to a maximum of six times.

These Ying & Yang symbols are one of the handiest pick-ups in the game. Once collected they save the characters' position and stats, so should they both die they'll restart the game back here as they were. However, should only one character die then he must wait until his partner finds another symbol, whereupon he'll re-enter the game

This is what you've been aiming for - the gateway to the next level. However, if you've not activated enough nodes you're wasting your time hanging about here...

Specials like this are an unknown quantity. It may activate that node in the inaccessible pit, or warp in new monsters, or both. The only way to find out is to pick it up and then learn from the experience.

These turret-like plants are a real nuisance, as they spray bullets diagonally in four directions. Destroy 'em as soon as you see 'em!

These insects are more of a pain than a problem, though it's wise not to ignore them and walk past or they'll keep bugging you.

Here's where the heroes come in on this piece of the action, with a perilous walk past those yellow mounds on the walkway which rain poisonous green blobs on anything below.

Money is vitally important. It can be found just lying around in piles on the floor or left behind by slain monsters. It's used in the shop to buy upgrades and improve your characters' abilities

Lizardmen amble about, firing at and homing in on the characters. They take a fair few shots to destroy.

These blocks are destructible, and a single shot will send them crumbling. However, blast the right one and you may find a gold key leading to that bonus-packed pit below...



Keys are essential to progress. Collecting one (by walking over it) will open up areas elsewhere on the level and, more's the pity, generate a fresh gang of monsters to fight you. Silver keys are the most important and most essential, as they open up the pathway to the level exit. Gold keys, on the other hand, are optional, as they reveal secret rooms and paths leading to treasure troves, although you'll have to be prepared to put up a fight to reach them. Shooting certain objects in the landscape may do likewise.

After each level you're given a breakdown of your performance, showing a percentage of how much of the level was completed broken down into how many monsters were killed, treasure collected, etc. If your percentage is low then it means you probably missed secret areas, so why not try to find them next time? The cash collected during the level is then shared out, and the amount each character receives corresponds to how well they performed. Just standing around at the back, letting your mate do all the work, will earn you diddly.





The maps are constructed from platforms and walkways, connected by ladders and steps. It's impossible for a character to shoot a mutant on a level above or below him. However, certain special items, such as the dynamite, can be lobbed down into a pit while others, like the bomb, effect everything on-screen. But the mutants have a few tricks up their own non-existent sleeves, as some can 'hop' between levels with ease.

Each character can carry a reserve payload of 'special items', accessed by holding down the FIRE button. To begin with each character is given one (their 'speciality' special) but, as they progress and build up experience, more are made available to buy in the shop, assuming their character has the capacity. These vary from the handy, like the map (shown), to the useful, like the first-aid kit, to the essential, like the screen-clearing bomb. In one-player mode the player can swap specials with those of his computer partner by tapping the space bar.



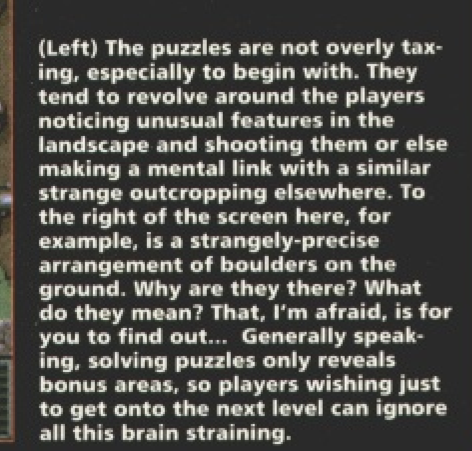


(Above) Players are given access to the shop after every other level, and it's here where you can spend all that hard-fought-for cash. This can be used to buy extra lives, beef up the character's weapon, buy special items and, very importantly, raise the character's abilities (like speed, health and 'skill'). The stats work much like those of the players in Speedball 2, in that each stat can only be increased so much until the other stats have been built up to a similar level. Effectively this stops characters being, say, super fast but incredibly weak.



(Above) The bad guys have a wide range of attack modes. Some will just try to home in on you, some will try to shoot you, some will try to home in AND shoot you... Whatever, they're sure to keep you on you toes. Some monsters just patrol areas of the screen and, once shot, disappear forever. Others, however, are produced by generators and should you see one it's wise to concentrate all your arsenal on that before worrying about the meanies.

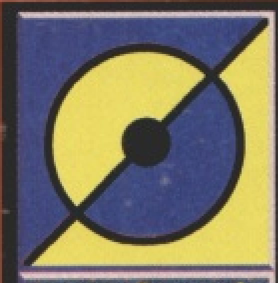




(Left) The puzzles are not overly taxing, especially to begin with. They tend to revolve around the players noticing unusual features in the landscape and shooting them or else making a mental link with a similar strange outcropping elsewhere. To the right of the screen here, for example, is a strangely-precise arrangement of boulders on the ground. Why are they there? What do they mean? That, I'm afraid, is for you to find out... Generally speaking, solving puzzles only reveals bonus areas, so players wishing just to get onto the next level can ignore all this brain straining.

THE VERDICT

So, should you place your order for Chaos? (Geddit?) There's no doubt that it looks terrific. The 'Steam-punk' graphics are wonderfully imaginative and the frenetic rate that everything shifts at is certainly adrenalin-pumping. Aurally it's even better - I'd even go as far to say that the game has the best music and sound effects I've yet heard in an Amiga game. The way the in-game tunes subtly alter to reflect where you are in the game and the state of play is amazing and adds to the atmosphere tremendously. Although it's been tried before in games like Wing Commander it's never worked so well as here; you've really got to hear it to believe it. The actual game's great too, but despite the Bitmaps' protestations to the contrary I'm really not that sure that it really is that much more than Gauntlet for the 90s. Sure, there's a bit more thinking involved in getting from A to B, and the many secret rooms and paths provide a certain incentive to return and re-explore oft-trod areas, but the core game task is still monster-bashing and this, no matter how much it's polished up, can get a little tiresome. Although it's normally the case that two-player games are more fun than one-player, the opposite's true for The Chaos Engine. If one player is lagging behind then because of the way the scroll works the other player is forced near the edge of the 'window', meaning it's easy for nasties to appear on top of them without warning. You could argue that both players should stick close and move together, but that's not a very natural - or exciting - way to play. The Chaos Engine is a classy slice of guns-blazing, gritted-teeth action, but even so it's unlikely to convert anyone who doesn't already like this sort of thing.



Publisher: Renegade
Developer: The Bitmap Brothers

£25.99 Out Now

Keyboard/joystick

MEMORY	DISKS
1Mb	2

GRAPHICS



84%

SOUND



96%

PLAYABILITY



83%

LASTABILITY



82%

OVERALL

85%

HISTORYLINE 1914-1918

After the blast-'em Apidya, Blue Byte return to familiar territory with its latest. David Upchurch reports from the front...

War is hell, they say, and they don't come much more hellish the the First World War. It was the most brutal war of all time - millions died and millions more were left physically and mentally scarred by the bitter four-year-long conflict.

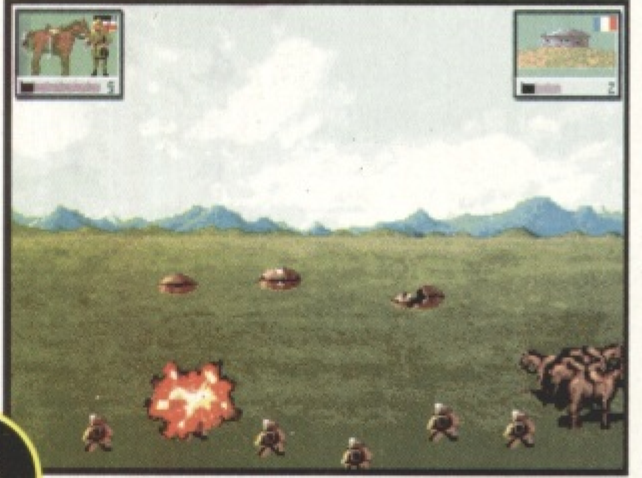
Given the war's ferocity and the fact that it hasn't yet drifted far enough into the past to be considered 'safe', it's not the most obvious candidate for computer simulation. It's not easy to make entertainment out of such a serious subject without trivialising it. Black Adder Goes Forth managed it with its final episode and, to be fair, Blue Byte (a German company, would you believe) haven't done too badly either with this.

The game is basically Battle Isle with low-tech vehicles. Against either a friend or the computer, players take it in turns to move their units and attack each other in time-honoured fashion on a split-screen scrolling battle map with the aid of a simple but comprehensive point-n'-click player interface. Each 'scenario' is based on a real battle from the War, the first being simple infantry vs infantry affairs but getting more complex and involved as the conflict escalates. New units are also brought into play during the game according to when they were invented during the war itself.



Given that some people may find offense in a game ablout a terrible war that is still relatively recent, it's not surprising to find that there's a strong educational anti-war element in there as well. Between battles there's text and animations relating actual events from the course of the war and statistics detailing each side's casualties. It can make pretty grim reading at times.

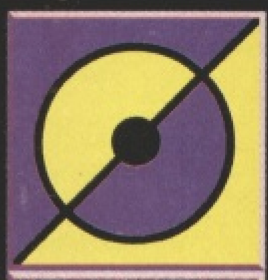
Moving a unit is simple - just select it with the cursor and the computer will show where you may move it to, which varies according to the terrain and the unit's mobility. Movement over you can attack enemy units in range via a similar point-n'-click system. Although you can perform many really tricky operations, this clever interface makes it all quite painless.



When opposing units get too close then a fight is inevitable. These are depicted by a brief animation, although unless you've got a hard drive you tend to spend less time watching them than you do swapping disks and waiting for them to access. There is an option to turn them off, however, which speeds up the flow of play no end.

THE VERDICT

I enjoyed Historyline 1914-1918. I'm not normally an afficionado of wargames but thanks to Historyline's excellent design, which handles all the boring bits with remarkable aplomb, it hardly feels as though it belongs to that much-maligned genre at all. Although easy to play there's plenty of depth beneath the simplistic surface, truly making this a game that'll appeal to buffs and the general gamesplayer alike. But I liked Battle Isle so I suppose I was bound to like Historyline, as in play the games are near identical. Sure, there are animations to depict the battles but they're neither well drawn or that interesting. They get very boring very quickly, hard drive or not, so you'll soon be turning them off. The educational stuff is quite interesting and gives weight and background to the games, and the way that the scenarios escalate according to how the actual war progressed makes for a nice, natural difficulty curve. But it's weird that you're fed all these depressing facts like X thousand dead and Y million crippled, yet in the animated battles you never see anybody getting hurt or killed. It's like having a film with the gritty, downbeat mood of Platoon but depicting any violence with all the 'realism' of the A-Team. Despite the above reservations I highly recommend Historyline, but do bear in mind that it is really little more than Battle Isle V1.1 in a new setting.

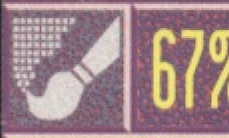


Publisher: Blue Byte
Developer: In-house

£25.99 Out Now

Keyboard/joystick/joypad

MEMORY	DISKS
1Mb	7

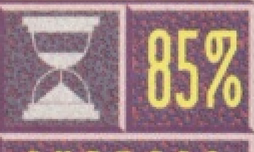
GRAPHICS

67%

SOUND

52%

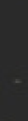
PLAYABILITY

83%

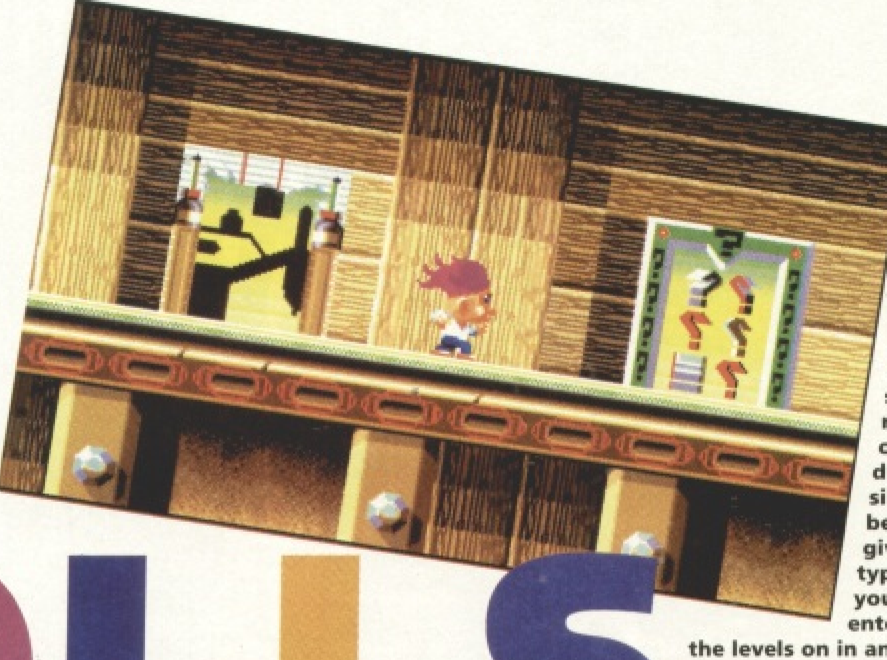
LASTABILITY

85%

OVERALL

81%


THE BITMAP BROTHERS

Hooray! Those irritating plastic dolls with the stupid coloured hair have finally made their ever-so-eagerly-awaited computer game debut! Gary Whitta swallows his pride long enough to review it.



Trolls starts off here, in the magical land round the back of the toymaker's house. All the game's levels are accessed simply by running through one of the many doorways - the silhouette beyond each door gives a clue to the type of world you're about to enter. You can take the levels on in any order, but they all have to be clocked before you can unlock the big oak door that bars the way to the final challenge at the top of the uppermost corridor.

TROLLS

Well, it just goes to show - anybody can have a licensed game, provided they're willing to scrape the barrel deeply enough. There are plenty of tie-in opportunities if you know where to look - and if you don't particularly care what it is. Let's be honest, the Trolls are hardly class A1 licence material, are they? The mildly-annoying little dolls with monkey-like faces and colourful hair that you can twiddle with are a bit... well... girly, aren't they? They're not exactly the zenith of street-cred. Yup, I think I can safely say that in licence terms, this is the limpest thing since Robin Smith's International Cricket.

But hey! We're not here to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of a licence - what's the game like? is the only question worth asking around these parts. And the answer's a simple one; it's a scrolling platform collect'em-up type thing in the vein of games like Harlequin, Robocod and Zool. Unfortunately, however, it doesn't pack quite the same punch of any of those three favourites. The story (what there is of it - it reads like a bad French-to-English translation) tells of a wooden Troll who comes alive one night on the toymaker's shelf to find himself staring at a doorway to a magical world. A strange voice in his head tells him he must enter and find baby trolls who have been kidnapped, or something. So off he goes into the platform-based fourth dimension for a bit of jumping around on platforms and collecting colourful objects across a series of themed worlds. You can't go wrong with a tried and tested formula, can you?



So this is what it all boils down to. On each level, Troll (that's you) has to locate and collect a predetermined number of baby Trolls before finding the exit point. Once that's done the level is completed and it's onto the next. But finding the babbies is easier said than done, with your task being thwarted by no end of cutesy enemies and level designs that are more contorted and mazelike than in most platform games. Troll can kill his enemies by bouncing on their heads (some allow him to get extra-high springy jumps by doing so), but contact with any other part of a baddy drains his energy. Boo!

THOSE TROLL WORLDS IN FULL



TOY LAND
Just what you'd expect, really. This is one of Trolls' cutest levels, consisting of fluffy playthings of every description. Teddy bears, toy soldiers and building blocks make up much of the landscape, just like the toylands in Rainbow Islands, Zool and others.



MEDIA LAND
Trapped inside what looks like a newspaper office on acid, Troll must contend with ink-squirting fountain pens, anglepoise lamps, ink bottles and other stationery. The background's made up of newspaper pages with amusing headlines.

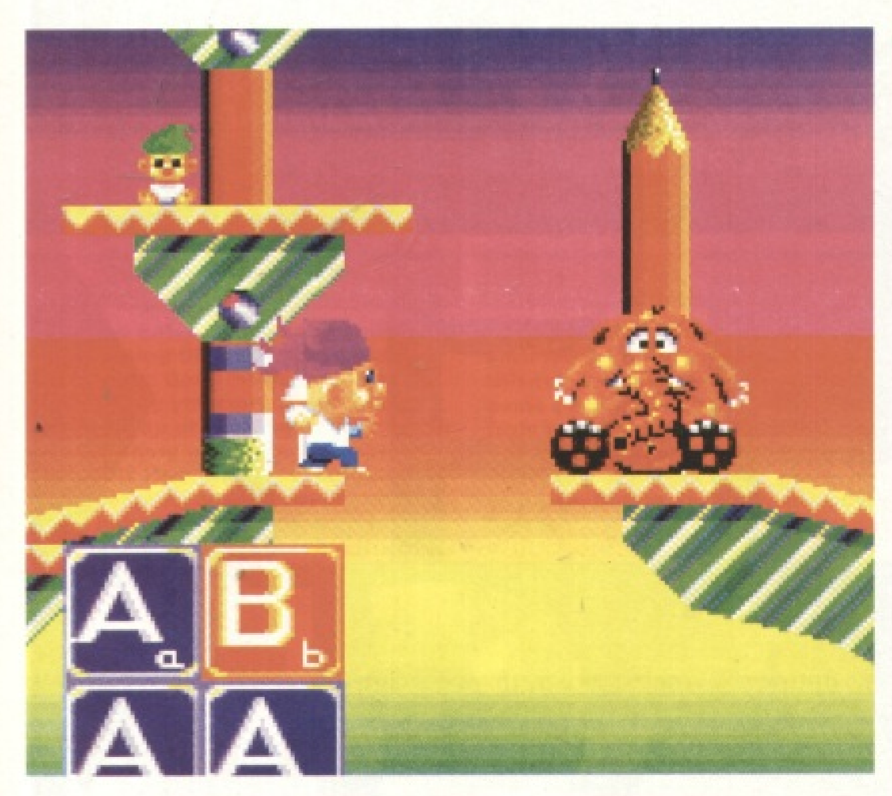


CHERRY SODA LAND
Ooh look, it's an underwater level, just like in Fire & Ice, BC Kid, Mario and al those otheres. The enemies are suitably piscine, ranging from crabs to electric eels, and Troll has to maintain his oxygen level by collecting air bubbles.

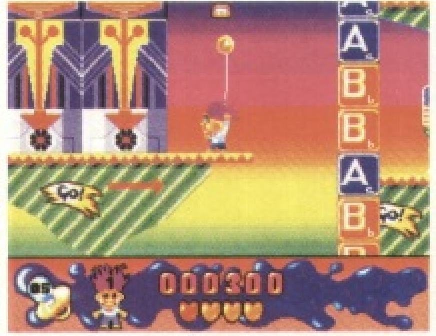


FAIRGROUND LAND
This is treacherous. Why? The fair is on a rickety pier, and the rotting timbers are ready to give way. There are lots of fun things too, though - you can ride on the helter skelter and gorge on hot dogs and toffee apples.





Handy restart points are provided by these big red jolly elephants. Touch one of these during your travels, and should you lose a life, you'll be returned to this point to restart. Elephants never forget, you see, and that's how the game remembers where you last were. Brilliant.



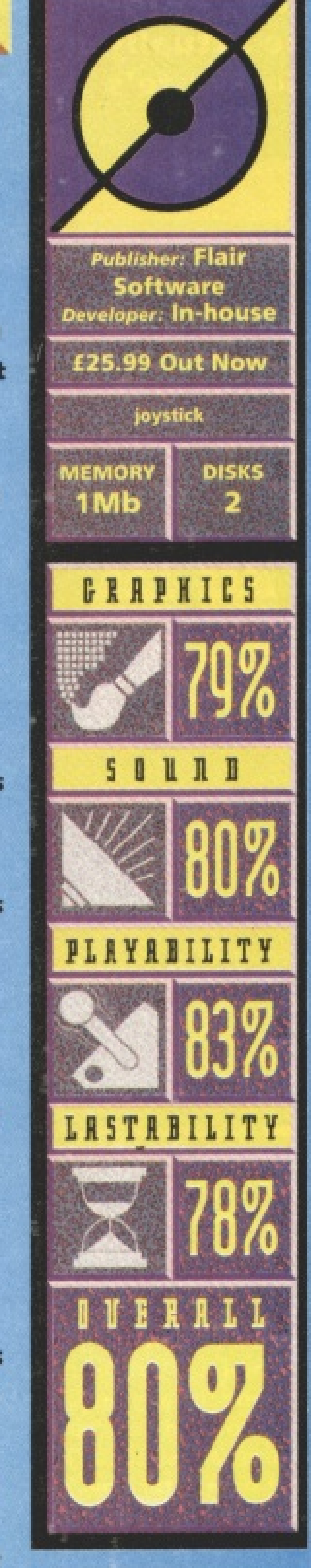


The yo-yo is one of the most useful objects in the game - once Troll has picked this up, he can spin it out at almost any angle to knock out destructible blocks and gain access to previously off-limits areas. It also hooks on to some objects, so our technicolour-haired hero can use it to swing from platforms like Tarzan, which is always handy. Unfortunately it has a limited range and can't be used to bash baddies, which can only be dispatched by bouncing on their bonces.

Apart from the yo-yo, there are plenty of other collectables and power-ups littering Trolls' levels, some with more beneficial effects than others. Good things include speed-up shoes, wings enabling you to fly, a shield, springy shoes and an alarm clock that freezes the monsters, while counted among the not-quite-so-good things are a ball and chain that slows you down and glasses of beer that makes Troll's control giddy and unresponsive for a short while. Just like in real life.

THE VERDICT

Unimaginative and derivative... both of these terms apply to Trolls, but neither of them stop the game being a lot of fun to play. Okay, so we've seen it all before dozens of times, in a few notable cases much better, but Trolls is still a more than competent exponent of the genre. It looks good, sounds good and is massively enjoyable. The fact is, though, that there really isn't much point in trying to describe how it feels or plays, because if you've already seen the likes of Zool, Harlequin or any number of similar platformers (which you undoubtedly have), then you've already seen just about everything that Trolls has to offer - and more. To say a game shares a lot with Zool et al is of course no bad thing, but since Trolls really doesn't have anything that new or original, it has little to recommend it if your platform shelf is already well stocked (as it most probably is by now). That's the bottom line, but if you're relatively new to the genre, Trolls, since it's friendlier than many other games around, might be just what you're looking for - it should certainly go down well with the younger players out there. But there's a limit to just how cute you can be, and Trolls pushes its luck at times. Aside from that, Trolls is a winner on the aesthetic side, offering plenty of pretty backdrops and sprites and some of the jolliest sound I've heard since System 3's Putty. All in all, Trolls is a creditable addition to the console-esque arcade scene, and any twitching platform-fixated freak in desperate need of a new fix having clocked Zool a dozen times is unlikely to find much to complain about here.



Publisher: Flair Software
Developer: In-house

£25.99 Out Now

joystick

MEMORY	DISKS
1Mb	2

GRAPHICS	79%
SOUND	80%
PLAYABILITY	83%
LASTABILITY	78%
OVERALL	80%





FABLE LAND
This fairytale level is populated by all manner of fave characters from children's fiction, including the Mad Hatter, Puff the Magic Dragon, Hobbits and many more. Magical gardens and castles provide the timeless setting.

BOARDGAME LAND
This is a pretty one. Snakes and ladders, Chess, Dominoes and Cards are the main background features in this colourful chequerboard level, with spinning counters and dice making up the rest of the fixtures and fittings.

CANDY LAND
It seems that no platform game is complete without a level made up of Liquorice Allsorts. Battle through the ice creams, candy canes and gum machines in search of the babies, and keep an eye out for the fat kids who don't want you nicking their sweets.

Simon Byron was a huge Doctor Who fan when he was a spritely, fresh-faced youngster. His mum and dad took him to one of the Doctor Who exhibitions at Longleat and he actually shook Peter Davidson's hand. Who better, then, to review Admiral Software's Time Lord sim? (Apart from Tom Baker, of course.)

DALEK ATTACK

EXTERMINATE!

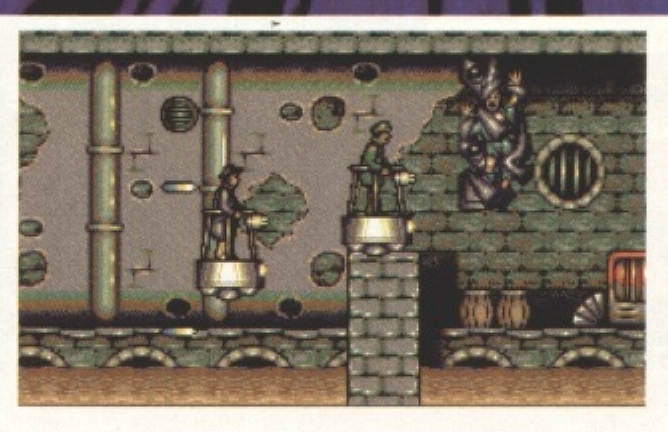
Saturday nights have never seemed the same since Doctor Who was banished to the Dark Void Of Occasional Repeats. I remember spending many an evening cowering behind my mummy whilst the Doctor battled it out with assorted scary enemies ranging from the scary Daleks to the frightening Sea Monsters (I nearly wet myself when I first saw them).

It never was a very impressive programme - most of the props looked like they'd been constructed out of stuck-together plastic washing-up bottles or a few crummy tin cans and, annoyingly, each episode usually began by altering the cliffhanger ending of the previous one in such a way as to allow the Doctor and/or one of his various assistants a 'legitimate' escape route. You could bet your life that no matter how sure you were that the Doc had fallen into a pit of deadly Venusian spiders, come next Saturday you'd discover that he had, in fact, rather cleverly substituted himself for a Jelly Baby or something equally unbelievable.

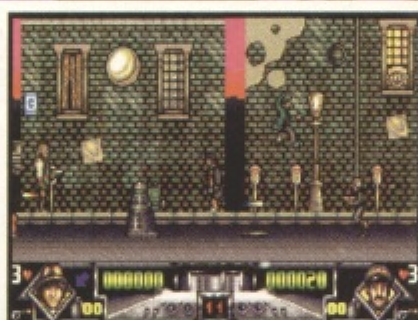
There's no denying, however, that, despite all its faults, Doctor Who was still a top laff and the nation wept as one when it was axed several years back. But, cheer up Time Lord fans, because now you can 'be' the Doctor and save the universe from the Daleks. There's the option to play either the Sylvester McCoy, Tom Baker or Patrick Troughton incarnations of the Doc, and a mate can join in the fun as Ace or a UNIT soldier and play along simultaneously in this jump-and-shoot affair set around the globe and climaxing on the wastes of Skaro, the Dalek's home world. Can you save the world from certain destruction and, more importantly, would you want to?



The first level takes place in this smelly sewer with our two heroes on a couple of stolen hover pads. If our two saviours hang about for too long a gang of horrible Daleks appear from behind and attempt to (ex)terminate our mates. Some quick side-on scrolling, wall-dodging action is exactly what's called for here.



During the chase through the sewers, the Time Lord and his mate come across a number of humans encased in Dalek cocoons. The imprisoned bods can be freed with a quick blast from the Doc's sonic screwdriver, releasing the tortured souls from their predicament. Not all the humans need to be freed but they're worth extra points, and we all know what points make.



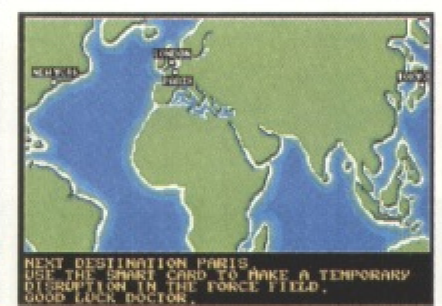
Once above ground, there's no time to check out the scenery (it's only crummy London anyway) as the Daleks have arranged a reception for the Doc. You need to think quick and move fast because there's trouble on all sides. You'll need to hold down FIRE as soon as you appear to release a smart bomb and avoid certain death from the meanies.



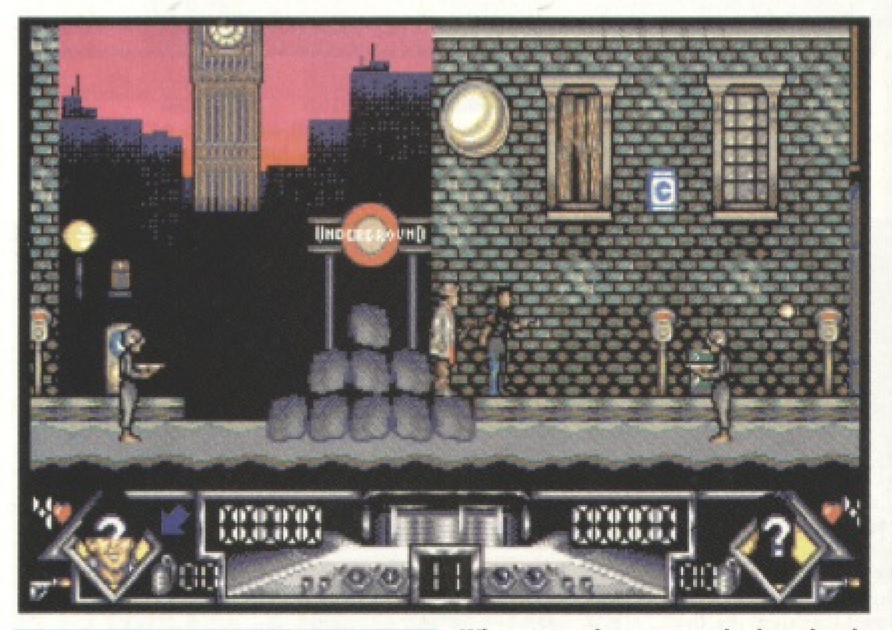
(Right) There ar loads of secre rooms. Pushing U at the top of thi tower will tak you to a whol new area. Don tell anyone w told you



You can enter most of the buildings by pressing UP when stood outside the doors. Once inside, you'll be greeted by yet more nasty Dalek's who'll stop at nothing in their death quest. There are often a number of valuable items, such as multiway-fire weapons and energy-increasing jelly babies to be discovered here.



After the successful completion of each level, you're presented with this comic-style interlude. As the game progresses the Tardis will zip from country to country with a separate mission in each. The fourth and final level, however takes place, not on earth, but on Skaro - home of the Daleks.



When two players are playing simultaneously, the screen concentrates on one character. This means that you'll often find that one player wanders off screen when the other player does something rash. You can swap between the Doctor and his assistant by tapping the space bar but this interrupts the flow of play somewhat.



The Doctor needs to run across the rooftop with alarming speed as parts of it disappear under his feet.

The Doctor can usually grab hold of any protruding ledges to enable him to climb ever higher.

Flying Daleks take even more shots to destroy.

This walkway is overflowing with Daleks. You'll have to make sure that you've picked up a handy lazer to be guaranteed an easy time.

THE VERDICT

As Dennis Norden might say, if you're one of those people who judges games by their graphics (and, believe me, there are a lot of you out there) then, on the pictorial evidence scattered about the page, you'll no doubt have decided not to purchase Dalek Attack. Admitted, this is not a 'must buy' by any stretch of the imagination but it's an entertaining platform game none-the-less. Although it's blatantly unoriginal - we (and probably you) have seen this sort of thing thousands of times before - it's well implemented and playable with it. Four levels of arcade action may not sound like much but, like the Tardis, there's a lot more going on inside than you might imagine - there are loads of secret rooms, sub-levels and the like which all need discovering before you can progress to the next stage. It's by no means an easy game - the Daleks and their friends require an inordinate amount of shots before they sod off and it is very easy to fall to your doom if you're not too careful. Still, at least the difficulty makes this a game that should see you well into the Spring, so you're getting value for money if nothing else. However, if there's one thing that I would change about Dalek Attack, it's the two-player mode. If you're going to have a simultaneous two-player mode then, for Heaven's sake, make it a simultaneous two-player mode and not an unplayable hybrid of a one- and two-player game. If you're prepared to overlook that niggle, however, and you're a fan of platform games and/or Doctor Who then you shouldn't be disappointed with this.



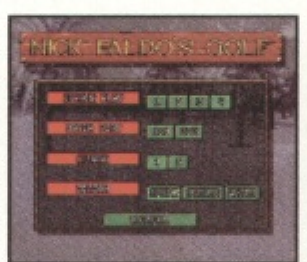
Simon Byron slips into his plus-fours and attractive golfing shoes for an afternoon of skiving down on the fairway

NICK FALDO'S CHAMPIONSHIP GOLF

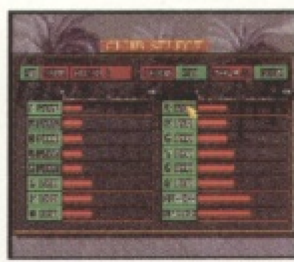
If anybody ever tells you that a great deal of business is conducted on the golf course, then give them a hefty whack because they're lying. Whilst most bosses claim that they're popping out onto the fairway to clinch a major deal or run a few brainstorming ideas past their partners and shareholders, they're actually skiving and reciting the phrase "Work is for people who don't know how to play golf" in unison. Yup, no business is ever done during a day's golf, only drinking in the nineteenth after a full day of not working.

Still, there's no doubting that golf is soaring in popularity and there are an ever increasing number of prospective golfers simply dying to try their luck on a waterlogged course. The only thing which prohibits most of us punters from taking to the bunkers, apart from the fact that we all can't take days off willy-nilly, is the cost of the actual equipment - a full set of clubs can now set you back around £600, a price well out of reach for the majority of us.

Thank goodness, then, for computerised golfing simulations. Amiga owners are becoming increasingly spoilt by the number of them popping up and, judging by their success, many gamers are partial to a quick round in the privacy of their bedroom. While there has been a few definite duffers, two stand out from the rest of the crowd, namely PGA Tour Golf and MIcroprose Golf. Grandslam's first attempt at a golfing game hopes to fit somewhere between the two top golfing games by combining realism with accessibility and, as such, emerging as the King of the Greens. Let's see how it fairs...



There are two types of golf you can opt to have a go at, Match Play and Stroke Play. In Match Play you have to complete eighteen holes in the fewest strokes possible and up to four computer- or human-controlled players can take part. Stroke Play works slightly differently; whoever putts his/her ball in the least amount of strokes wins that hole and the person/team who wins the most holes, wins the round.



You're allowed to take thirteen clubs onto the green, although you can select fewer if you're feeling lucky (or stupid). The red bar next to the club show how easy it is to use. Basically, the shorter the bar, the harder it is to hit the ball accurately so beginners are advised to select the clubs with the longest bars. You can also pick which caddy you want to carry your clubs and give unfunny sarcastic comments during play.



Once all the boring menu screens have been bypassed, it's on to the actual fairway for a pleasant round of golf. It's once you're on this screen that the sheer beauty of NFCG becomes obvious. This is, without a doubt, the best looking golf game on the Amiga. 'Out' is the empty feel of PGA Tour Golf and the rough polygon look of Microprose Golf and 'in' is an attractive bitmapped landscape with realistic trees and scenery. One up for Grandslam!

FOOOOOORE!

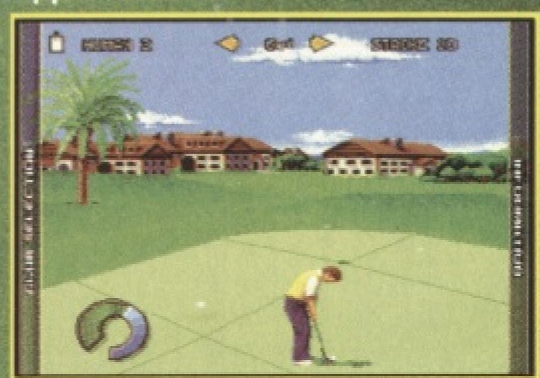
To successfully hit the ball in Nick Faldo's Championship Golf, you need to have a keen brain and fast reactions. We've got neither (which explains why we're all crap) but this is how you're supposed to do it...



You send the ball skywards by clicking the mouse below the golfer. Once this has been done, a bar will appear to the left of your sprite and start to 'fill up' from left to right. The first area that the bar moves through is the 'Wrist Snap' zone and if you click the button whilst the bar is travelling through this area then 10% extra power will be applied to the ball. It doesn't matter if you miss the WS zone, however, as it doesn't affect the ball's flight.



Once the bar has travelled through the Wrist Snap zone, it's time to start thinking about the important bit, namely the Double Click area. The scale of this part changes between clubs and the idea is that you've got to click the mouse button twice inside this area to make a solid contact with the ball. If you don't perform this tricky operation successfully then the golf ball will either hook (fly to the left) or slice (shoot off to the right).



After a few repetitions of the above actions you should, hopefully, find yourself nicely on the green. The display changes to show the contours of the area so you can judge how much power to apply to the ball (i.e. if the ball's running uphill the you'll need to whack it slightly harder). Except you can't because there's no guide anywhere on screen to give you any indication as to how hard you should tap the ball. Boo!



If you move the cursor to the left of the screen, this pop-out menu appears from which you can select your preferred club. The unavailable woods and irons are cross-hatched out, whilst the available clubs increase in brightness according to how easy they are to use. As you click on the available clubs, another bar appears at the bottom of the screen to show pictorially how much leeway you'll get when it comes to actually hitting the ball.

SEASONS TO BE CHEERFUL...

You can opt to play during either Spring, Summer or Winter, depending on your particular persuasion, and the graphics change to suit, as outlined in the rather sad poem below.



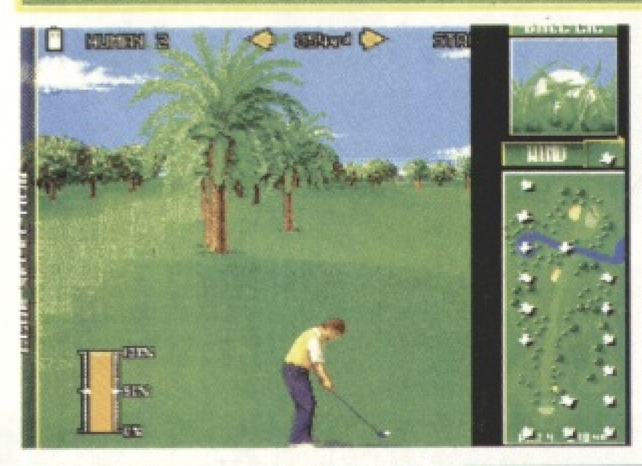
With weak wind and wet ground,
And birds that all sing,
It's perfectly obvious,
You're playing in Spring.



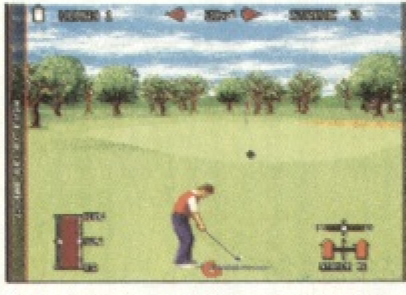
Summer's quite pleasant,
But to relieve that tedium,
The winds aren't too strong,
But the ground is medium.
(Oh dear - Ed.)



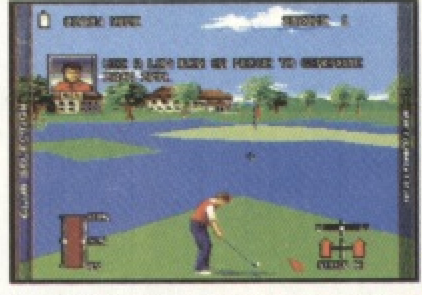
Brrr, it's very nippy,
But that's 'cause it's Winter,
Strong winds and hard ground,
Don't rhyme with anything.



To the right of the screen is another pop-out menu. This one shows you the course layout, the ball lie, the par for the hole and the rough direction of the wind. By clicking with the left mouse button you ean call up loads of arrows which show the way the wind is blowing in the different areas of the course.



Changing the direction that your golfer is facing can be achieved by clicking on the arrows at the top of the screen. Finer adjustments can be made by moving the crosshair.



Friendly Nick is a helpful old geezer and there's an option to practise any of the game's hazzards in a quick coaching session with the professional.

THE VERDICT

When you first load up Nick Faldo's Championship Golf, it really does look like it's going blow PGA and Microprose Golf right off the fairway. To be fair it very (very) nearly does but a few niggles let it down and, as such, it falls slightly below par when compared to the two golfing giants. First up, then, is the control system. Try as I did, I just couldn't really become proficient enough at it to confidently drive down the middle of the fairway every time. I know you can't make a game too easy but I'm sure that there's an easier way of simulating a golf swing (PGA's method, for example). The Double Click area is, on occasions, simply too small and it can extremely frustrating when a fluffed shot puts you in the dire trouble that NFGC does. If you play regularly, however, the Double Click area becomes larger (effectively making you better at the game) but surely it would have been a lot better had the area started off larger and decreased with play, adding a new challenge as your timing improved. The distance the ball will travel should also have been placed somewhere on the screen to relieve novices of the need to constantly refer to the manual. Although real golfers don't have this luxury, it would have improved playability no end. It's never too clear where the flag is, either, and a PGA-style icon wouldn't have gone amiss. These grumbles aside, the game is superb in every other respect. The graphics are simply stunning, the pop-out menus work very well and the sound, too, is extremely polished. In actual fact, all the loveliness of the game and the way you'd imagine it to be, had the above niggles been ironed out, make for a very frustrated reviewer. It IS a very good game but, unfairly perhaps, it's only the third best golfing game on the Amiga. Hey, Grandslam, do a sequel will you?



Publisher: Grandstand
Developer: Arc Develoments
£34.99 Out Now
Keyboard/joystick/joypad
MEMORY 1Mb
DISKS 2

GRAPHICS	SOUND	PLAYABILITY	LASTABILITY	OVERALL
91%	89%	84%	85%	85%

Joe and Mac, eh? They're cavemen, and they're ninjas! They've also been ported across from a Data East arcade machine. "Is this the best coin-op conversion ever?" wonders David Upchurch. Ha! Some hope...





(Above) At a couple of points during the game you, the player, can decide which path to take for the next stage of the quest. It makes no real odds which one you choose, but at least when you've finished the game (which shouldn't take long) you can play it again and sample the parts you missed the first time around.

(Left) Big bad bosses are, as usual, what pop up to prevent you progressing on to the next level. These are all fairly easy to dispose of except, for some very strange reason, this Tyrannosaurus Rex at the end of the first level. The trouble with this meany is it's never very clear where its weak spot is - I tried bashing it everywhere - and defeating it seemed more down to luck than skill.

Heard of this one? No, me neither. Apparently it was a coin-op from top arcade kings Data East, but if it was as bad as this Amiga conversion is then it's hardly surprising that it's so hard to find down your local arcade emporium. But I won't rip into it here - there's a whole Verdict coming up where I do that - so first let's get down to basics...

The plot then. Now stop me if you've heard this one before, but it revolves around two prehistoric pals called (hint in the title) Joe and Mac. While out hunting for leaves, berries and the odd lizard up in soe nearby mountains, J&M's village is attacked and destroyed by a neighbouring settlement of cave-dwelling ne'er-do-wells. When the boys get home and find their homes gone they are, to put it mildly, not happy. And when they discover that their top sexy girlfriends have been kidnapped to boot, they're positively furious - after all, it can get very lonely up in the mountains. So off they set to right what's wrong and bash some hairy heads in the process.

Yeah, it's an old plot (nearly as ancient as the prehistoric setting itself) and the gameplay is similarly uninspired. It's a case of running and jumping around five horizontally- and vertically-scrolling platform-based levels, bashing the bad guys, picking up power-ups and beating up the bosses. You know the sort of thing.

JOE & MAC CAVEMAN NINJA



THE STARS' TREK
Off set Joe & Mac, the Neolithic nutters, on their trek through Level 2. Do come with us - it's not a long journey...

Ooga-booga! These Captain Caveman look-a-likes form the majority of J&M's enemies...

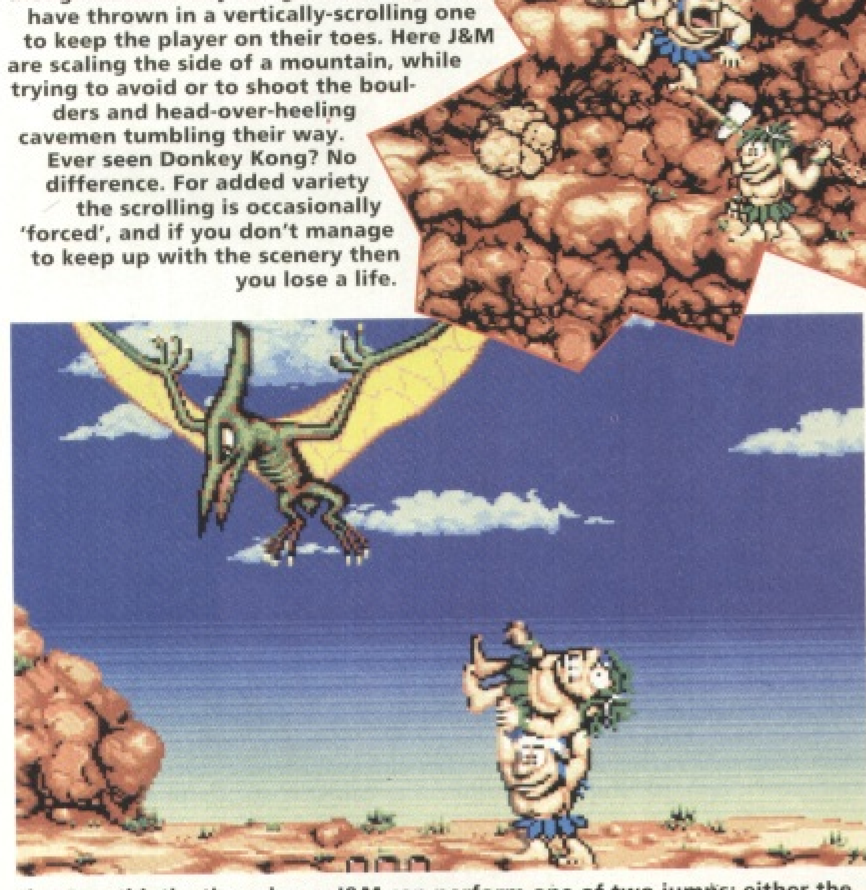
The path to this bridge is guarded by a venom-spitting Venus Flytrap - and this one eats more than flies...

By smashing open the eggs dropped by the Pterodactyls you can often find handy power-up weapons, although the occasional baby Pterry pops out so take care. The pick-uppable weapons range from the feeble (hand-axes) to the mighty (fireballs). There are some weird ones in there too, like stone wheels (so that you can run the enemy down, presumably) and even 'clone' cavemen, which run all about the place knocking over anything in their path.



In a similar manner to R-Type, J&M can 'power up' their various weapons by holding down on the Fire button. These 'super blasters' can come in very handy when faced with an end-of-level nasty or a screen packed with do-badders. However, their downside is that they take an age to generate - time in which you are completely vulnerable to attack. Best in general just to keep plugging away with your normal strength attack.

Most of the levels scroll horizontally, though occasionally the game's designers have thrown in a vertically-scrolling one to keep the player on their toes. Here J&M are scaling the side of a mountain, while trying to avoid or to shoot the boulders and head-over-heeling cavemen tumbling their way. Ever seen Donkey Kong? No difference. For added variety the scrolling is occasionally 'forced', and if you don't manage to keep up with the scenery then you lose a life.



They're athletic, these boys. J&M can perform one of two jumps; either the straightforward hop, to leap them from platform to platform, or the super-leap, which hurls them skyward. In two-player mode the two laddies can get up to some right laff-some escapades, such as picking up their partner and throwing them around the screen. Whether this ability is of any actual use, however, is another matter entirely...



Past the leaping salmon (which'll give J&M a nasty nip if they get too close) and our heroes are nearly there...

The end! Defeat this giant Flytrap (none too difficult) and the way to the third level is revealed...

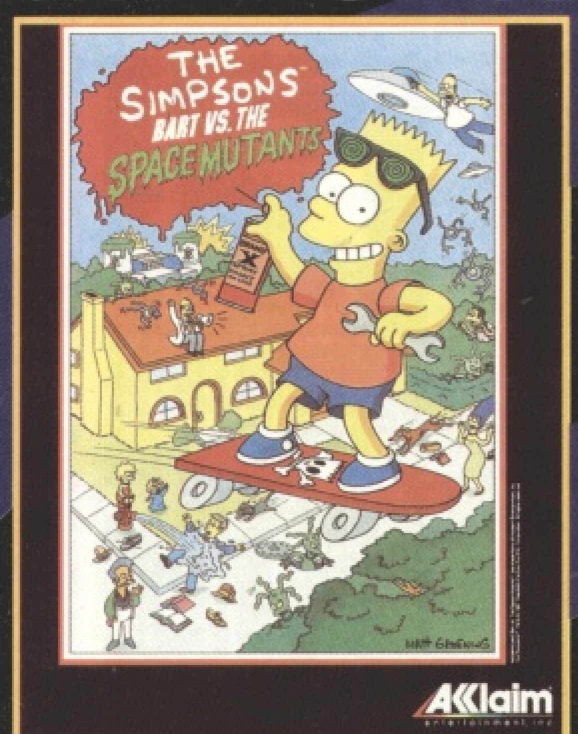
THE VERDICT

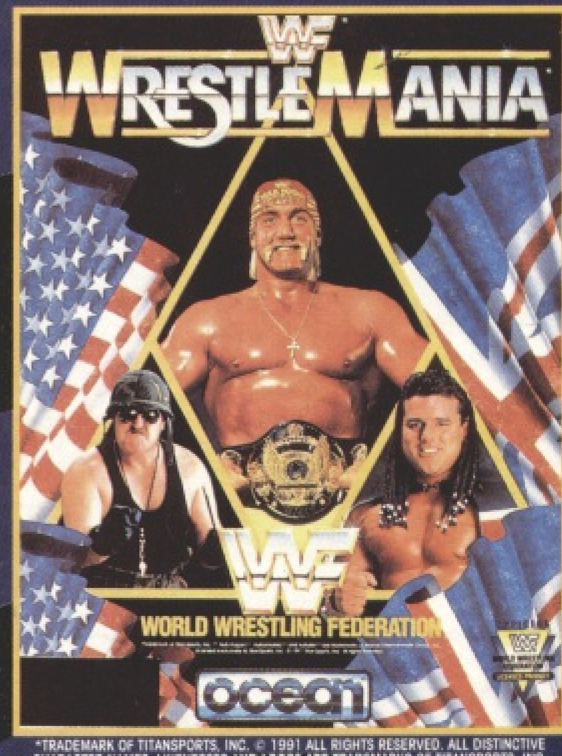
Come on, everybody! Get inside the time machine - we're going back to 1989! It's tragically appropriate that Joe & Mac Caveman Ninja is set in days of yore, because the game itself looks and feels like something dredged out of one of those Blue Peter time capsules. Despite the occasional use of some okay-ish parallax, the graphics hark back to the bad old days, when games were first written for the Atari ST then ported lazily across the Amiga with little or no use of the Commodore's more-powerful abilities. The colour palettes are garish, and it's often hard to pick out the sprites from the backgrounds. Worse still, everythings so sluggish - the so-called Ninjas amble around like they've been drugged and getting them to do anything quickly (pretty essential for a game like this) is near-impossible. Difficulty-wise, it's paradoxically very hard and very easy. On the one hand the unresponsive controls mean that you get hit with frustrating regularity and the fact you get no brief period of invulnerability after a strike often results in a painful 'death loop', where you might as well go and make a cuppa as your Ninja gets knocked down again and again with no chance of rescue. On the other hand, the levels are so short and the end-of-level baddies so simple to defeat that just by muddling through and 'Continuing' you can get over two-thirds of the way into the game after a couple of tries. I'm sorry but I've tried and I just can't find anything to praise here. Oh, hang on, I can. The sound's quite nice. Phew!

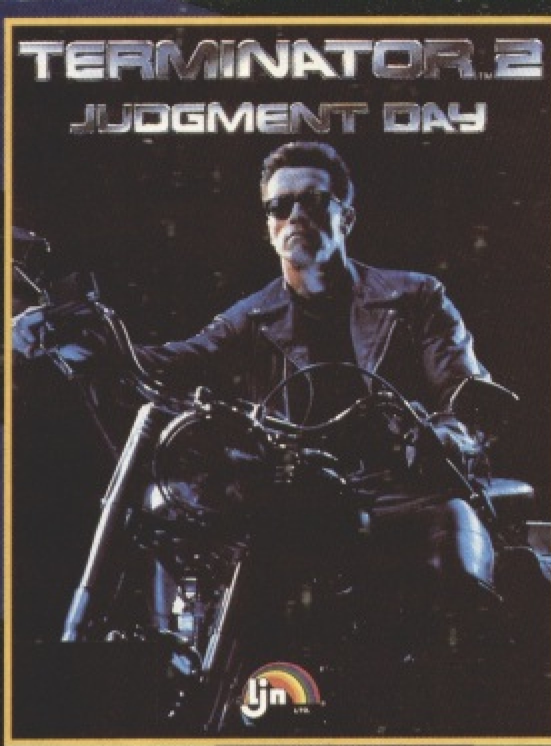
Publisher: Elite Systems
Developer: In-house
£25.99 Out Now
joystick/joypad
MEMORY 1Mb | DISKS 2

GRAPHICS	64%
SOUND	68%
PLAYABILITY	31%
LASTABILITY	28%
OVERALL	22%

THE BEST COMPILATION OF ALL TIME







THE DREAM TEAM

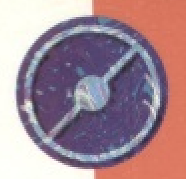
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DARKSEED

Sci-fi author Mike Dawson is about to get some new neighbours - and as they've come from the warped mind of H. R. Giger, they ain't too pleasant. Gary Whitta delves into the darkly mysterious world of Cyberdreams' adventurous debut...

All is not well in the smalltown Californian suburb of Woodland Hills. In fact, there's something very dodgy indeed going on, and the only person with any clue as to what it might be is retired ad exec Mike Dawson, who's just moved into a creepy old Victorian house on the outskirts of the town. Why is he having horrible nightmares about alien experiments and waking up each morning with throbbing migraines? What's the secret of that odd mirror in his living room? And, more importantly, why does he sleep in his clothes?

As Darkseed opens, the first graphic image gives you an idea of what to expect throughout the game - a gruesome nightmare sequence in which our hero has something disgusting implanted inside his head by alien bio-machines. But is it just a dream?

All these and more questions are answered in the bizarrest possible fashion in Darkseed which, as you've probably already guessed, is a seriously odd game. The Amiga debut from fledgeling US publisher Cyberdreams takes its inspiration from the surreal creations of Swiss artist HR Giger, whose biomechanical imagery formed the basis of the Alien films and has since influenced much of modern science fiction art. And if Giger's art (which was digitised directly from his original paintings to form the landscape of the 'dark world') isn't enough to get your weird buds tingling, the plot is straight out of a Stephen King novel. No, the house isn't built on an ancient indian burial ground. Instead what we have is a mirror in the living room that acts as a gateway into a freakish alien dimension, a sinister plot to plant alien embryos in the brains of humans and a whole lotta... well, weirdness along the way.

Bizarre story and artwork aside though, Darkseed is a fairly conventional point-and-click graphic adventure in the Monkey Island mould, comprising around 75 locations, a good smattering of characters to chat to and - rarely seen - high-resolution 16-colour graphics that go a long way to emulating those seen in the PC original, but with some inevitable screen flicker. So, turning the music up loud and the lights down low, it's time to see something really scary...

MAN ABOUT TOWN

Although Mike Dawson's house is easily big enough to get lost in, it's only when you leave and see what Woodland Hills has to offer that the game's mysteries begin to unravel. You'll also have your first contact with the game's other characters here, who generally have something useful to tell you.



THE BARBER SHOP
Not much going on here, although we all know what a good source of gossip hairdressers are, so maybe it's worth dropping by...



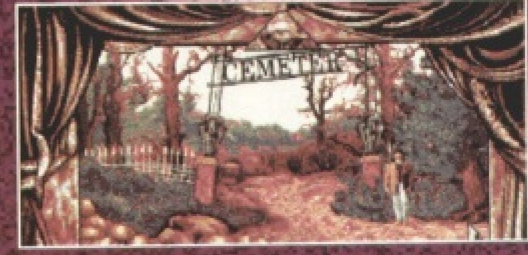
KLUG'S FOOD MARKET
Drop in good old Klug's for a bit of a chat and to stock up on much-needed provisions - although there's only one thing you really need to buy.



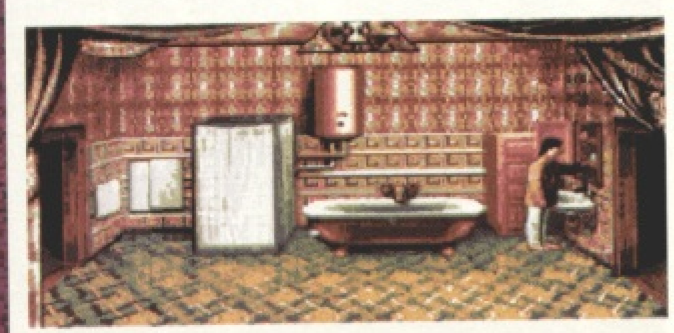
THE POLICE STATION
You don't need to come here, although the twisty-turny plot guarantees you'll end up here whether you like it or not. Good job your new friend Delbert's a lawyer...



THE LIBRARY
One of the most useful locations in the game - if you can get the help of the frosty but very attractive librarian, that is. Referring to the right books, and later microfiches, can yield some vital clues. And if you can melt the heart of the woman with the rubber stamp, you might just get the girl as well as save the world from alien invasion.



THE GRAVEYARD
It's morbid we know, but you'll need to pay a few visits here, seeing as many of the characters referred to in the game have already passed on. Needless to say, a shovel comes in handy. Ooh, and look out for a neat sideswipe at adventure rivals lucasfilm - one of the poor souls laid to rest here is G. Threepwood...



Waking after his first troubled night's sleep in his new home, our hero finds himself to be a bit pongy and with a splitting headache. So, the first order of the day (and every day, in fact) is to pop into the bathroom, pop an aspirin and freshen up in the shower. After that it's up to you, but it's a good idea to have a thorough look around the house before venturing outside. It's a big old-style house with around 15 rooms, including a couple of secret chambers and clues aplenty.



The player interacts with the Darkseed environment via an intelligent pointer - the right button selects the function (move, examine, use, etc), and the left button executes the desired command. Because of the high-resolution graphics it can be tricky to pick out small objects and clues, so the pointer helps out by changing shape whenever an item that can be examined or collected is passed over. Objects in Mike's inventory are accessed and used by going up to the all-seeing eye at the top of the screen, from where load, save and restart options can also be gotten to. All in all, it's a well-designed control system.

Much of the mystery in Darkseed revolves around discovering just what went on in this old house before you arrived. The previous owner's identity is unknown at first, but some searching around the house and in town reveals some useful clues and that something very weird was happening here prior to your arrival. A lot of the clues seem to point to that odd-looking mirror in the living room, which curiously has a fragment missing. What can it all mean...?

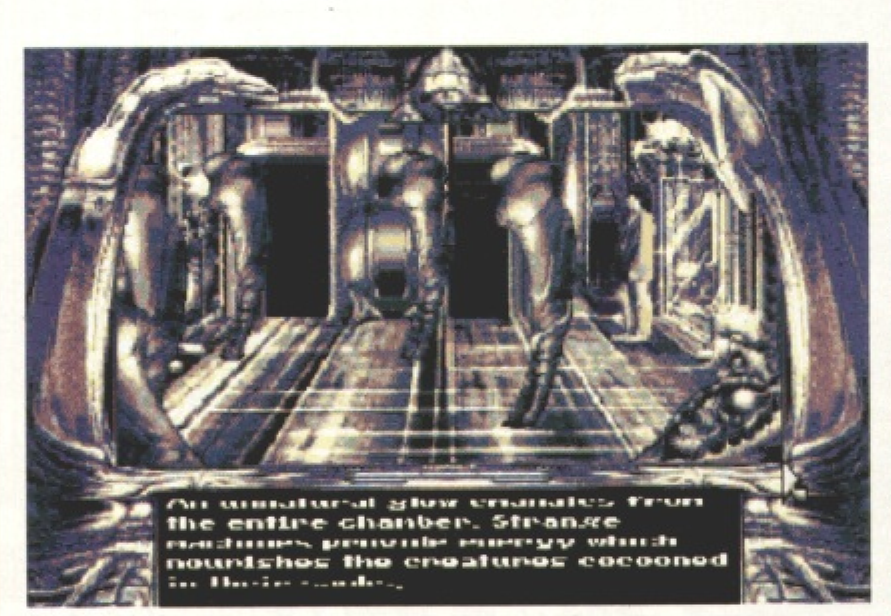
The player has only three days to complete Darkseed, with the first alien contact only possible by day two, so you have to work fast. Each action takes a set amount of game time, and you need to keep checking the time as there are often appointments to keep and opening hours to consider. You can find the time by referring to the grandfather clock in the living room or via a wristwatch, to be found somewhere in the house. Mike automatically becomes tired and goes to bed at ten o'clock each night, and is obviously so exhausted that he can't even be bothered to take his clothes off before sliding in between the sheets.

THEDARK WORLD

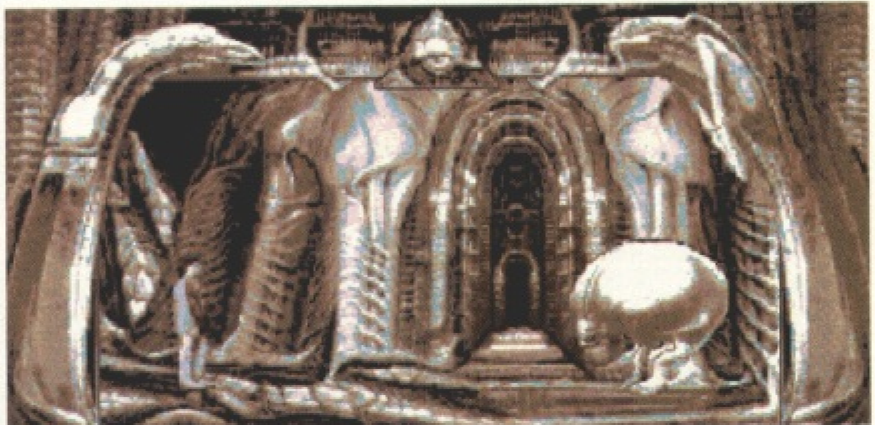
Once the player has repaired the mirror in the living room, it becomes a portal through which you can travel between the real world and the freaky, Giger-inspired monochromatic alien universe. You'll spend about half your game time in each world, as you tend to skip back and forth fairly regularly. The weird thing to notice is that the two worlds are in fact reflections of each other, so every game location has its opposite number, and an action carried out in one dimension may create ripples that become reality in the other. Bizarre...



A-ha! A shufty through some blueprints in the alien planning room reveals just what the biological terrors are up to - they've planted an alien embryo in your brain and when it hatches it'll take over the world! That explains the nightmares and the headaches, but what are you going to do about it?



Initially, it's worth walking round the creepy alien world just to take in the Giger-esque landscapes. But be careful what you touch, as 99% of all the game's deadly things are found here. After a while, though, you'll want to find out just what all this means. Why are the aliens here?



Much of the objects in the dark world are deadly to the touch, and though there aren't many alien characters, the ones you meet are hardly pleased to see you either. In particular steer clear of the Drekketh Guard, a bulbous creature that skewers you with an organic spike if you get too close.



THE CREEPY CAST



DELBERT

He may look and sound like the village idiot, but Delbert is in fact a sharp lawyer and his help proves invaluable later in the game. He's got a fondness for cheap scotch, so bear that in mind.



THE POSTMAN

This guy doesn't have much to say for himself, but you'll see him fairly regularly thanks to all the mystery parcels that are being sent anonymously to the house.



THE COPS

The local fuzz don't have too much to do with the early part of the game, but a run-in with the law in inevitable once they hear about you digging up graves down at the cemetery. Later on, when the police's dark secret emerges and they start staking out your house, you'll want to give them a wide berth.



THE LIBRARIAN

Phwoar, eh? Nudge, nudge! Darkseed's love interest is this shapely book-stamper, who gives Mike an ambivalent reception at first but is drawn strangely closer to him by circumstances later on. She's one of the more helpful characters of the game, if only because her stacks of books and microfiche room come in handy for extracting clues.



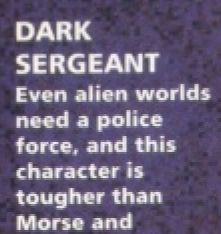
KLUG

Klug runs the local grocery shop, and is always happy to see new trade. But he doesn't give credit, so you'll need some of the folding stuff if you're to get any of the goodies on his shelves. How you get it is just one of your problems...



SARGO

Sargo is about the only friendly character you'll meet in the Dark World - he's a prisoner in the alien cells where you'll inevitably spend some time. After nine long years in a bony cell, he's willing to do just about anything if you'll help him escape...



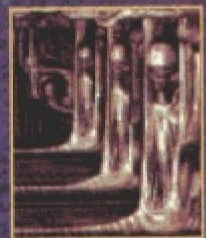
DARK SERGEANT

Even alien worlds need a police force, and this character is tougher than Morse and Taggart rolled into one. Don't get on his wrong side - although, come to think of it, it's impossible not to.



DARK FIDO

Would you believe an alien guard dog? You'd better, because this Giger Rottweiler guards a bridge over a bottomless abyss that leads to some of the game's more important locations. How to get past him? Try appealing to his canine instincts...

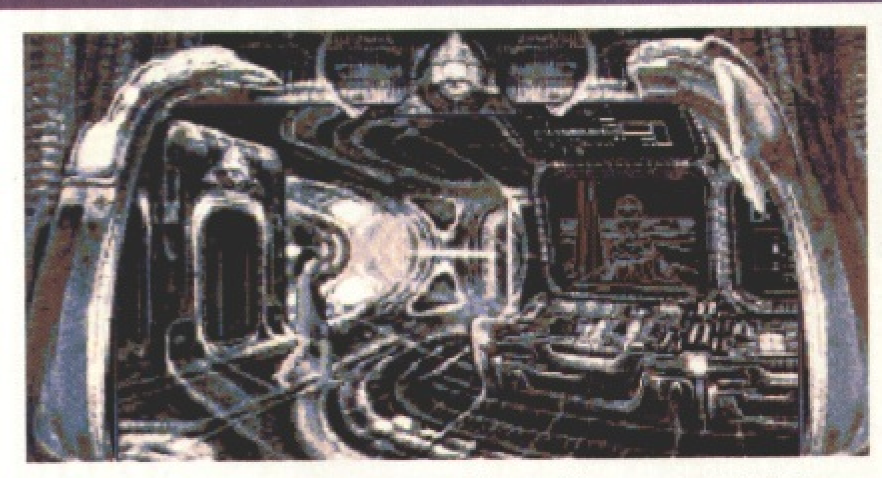


DREKKETH GUARD

Don't mess with the Drekketh Guard - he bars the way to the alien archive room, which Dawson must penetrate to if he's ever to get to the bottom of all this. But you can't talk to him or budge him, and if you go near him it's instant death. So how do you get past?

THE ANCIENTS

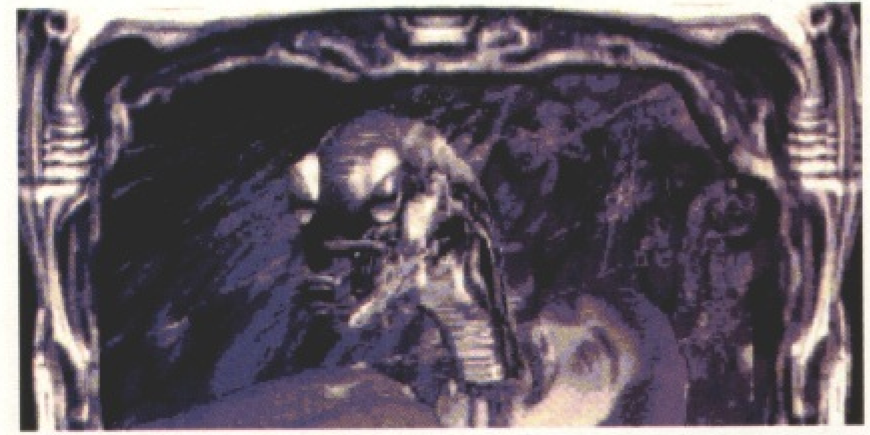
The masterminds of the whole insidious plan, the Ancients remain in a state of suspended animation, waiting for when the alien in Mike Dawson's head is born and they can awake to take over the Earth. DON'T, whatever you do, touch them, or they'll give you more than a bad headache.



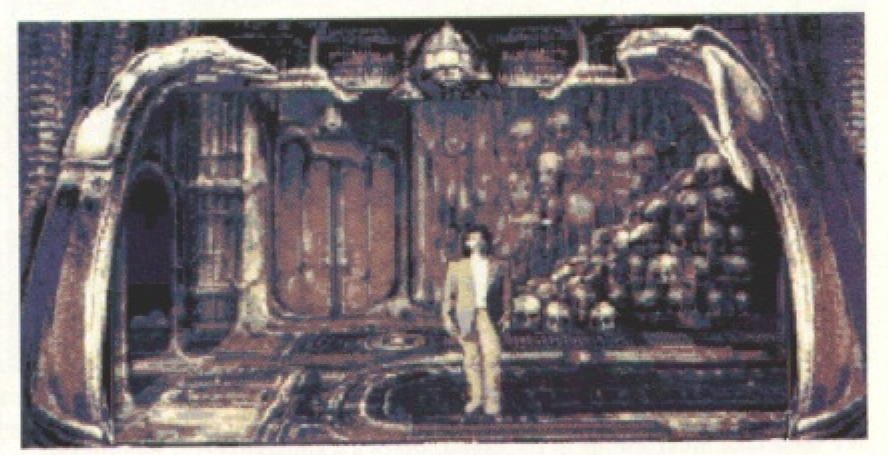
Searching the rooms of this cavernous alien world soon reveals that the extra-terrestrial baddies are more advanced than you first thought. It's tempting to play with this high-tech control panel, but unless you know what you're doing nothing much is likely to happen.



(Above and below) An example of how the real and dark worlds are so strangely alike. Notice the similarities - they both have exits to the left and right, and the odd pile of skulls in the alien world is a copy of the staircase in the Earth room. Initially, the dark world room...



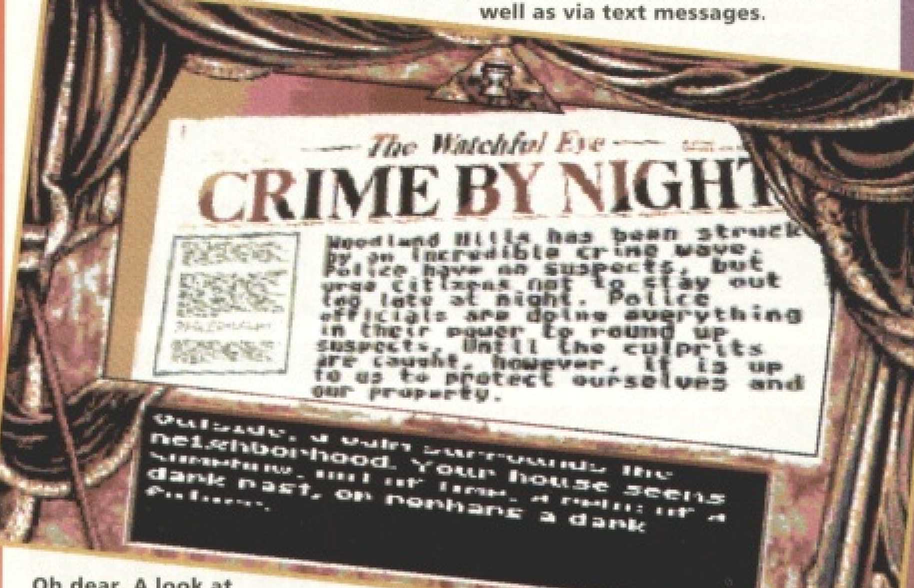
Ooops. It only takes three days after conception for the alien embryo in Mike's brain to hatch, so if the conspiracy hasn't been thwarted by that time, it's curtains for you and all humanity in a particularly nasty death sequence.



(continued from above) ...doesn't have a 'front door' that leads outside, though - you have to figure out how to make that appear by exploring other rooms in the alien world. Likewise, certain Earth inhabitants have mutant twins in the dark dimension.



Character interaction in Darkseed is limited - the computer cast talk to you, rather than you talking to them. There's no facility to, for example, pick verbal responses from a list as in the Lucasfilm games. Just listen and learn. Much of what's said to you is relayed as sampled speech as well as via text messages.



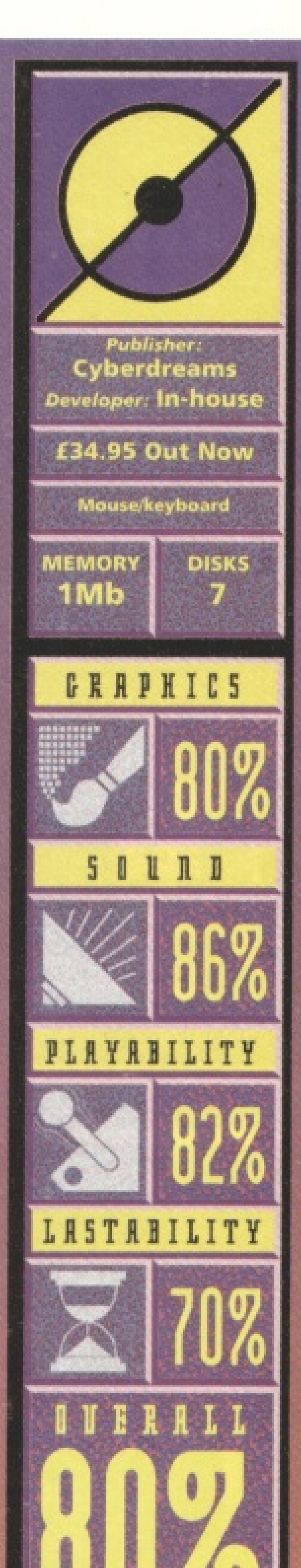
Oh dear. A look at the local newspaper reveals that a crimewave is currently underway in Woodland Hills. Could it be that the police force is preoccupied with something else? Most objects of note, when examined, appear in full-screen form. Smaller, but not necessarily less important objects, like a bobby pin for example, are instead described by a simple text message.

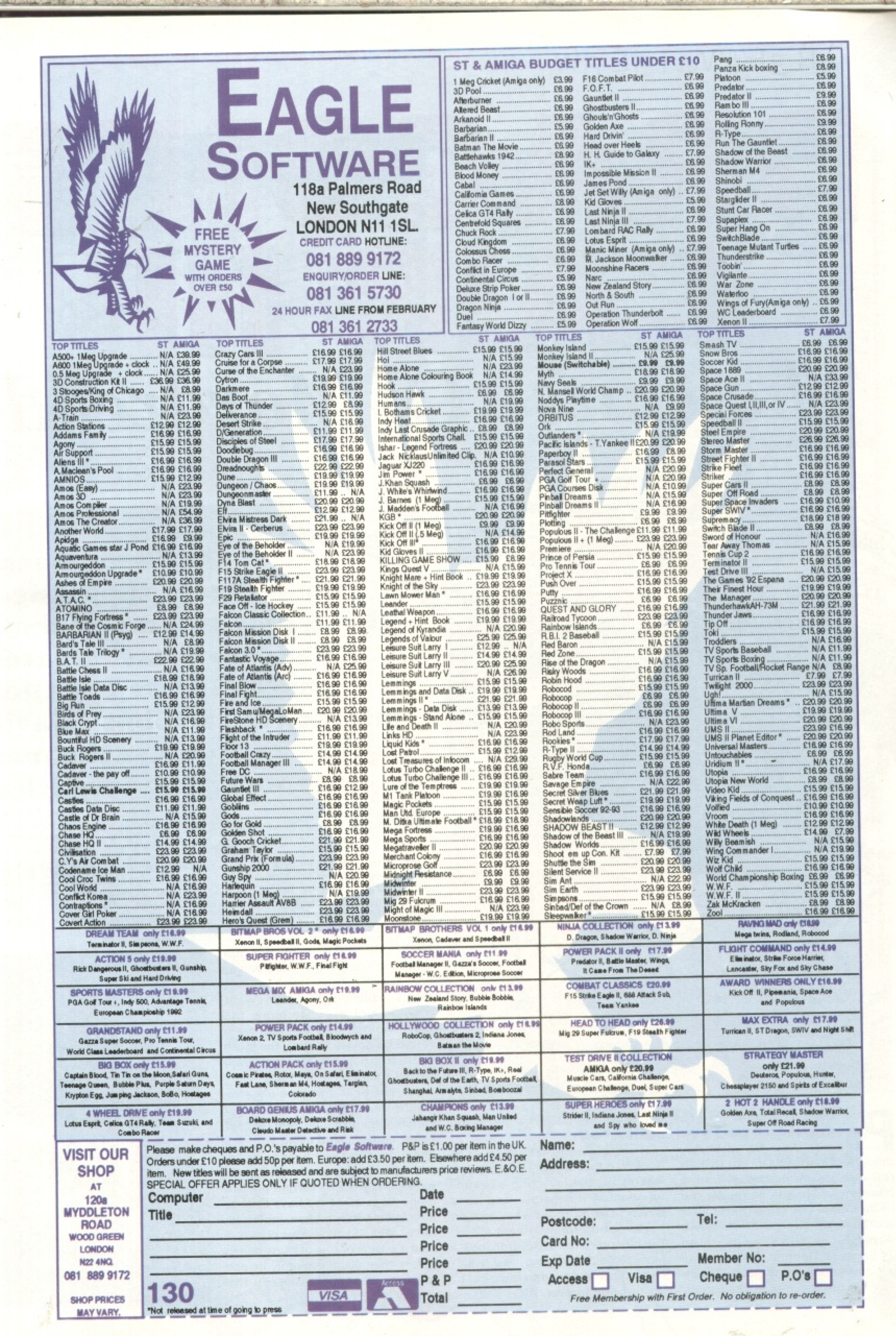


Taking a look around the grounds outside Mike's house, we discover an garage and, inside, a delapidated old car. But why has it been left to rot like this? Like most things in Darkseed, there's a sinister secret behind this motor. Try getting in to pick up some useful objects and the chance to play with the only two things in the car that work - the horn (beep beep!) and the car radio, which plays more than just groovy music...

THE VERDICT

Both as an adventure game and a piece of science fiction, Darkseed scores highly. The premise isn't a particularly original one, but good sci-fi is all about ideas and Darkseed has plenty of them, most of which are used to good effect game-wise - I particularly like the way the real and alien worlds mirror each other, so your actions create pan-dimensional ripples. In addition, the game creates a strong atmosphere, with some superb music, surreal set-pieces and, of course, Giger's artwork adds greatly to the claustrophobic tension. Indeed, Darkseed is graphically superlative throughout - it's a shame there has to be some high-res flicker, but it's only really noticable in the text messages at the bottom of the screen, which are sometimes hard on the eye. As an adventure going up against heavyweights like Lure, Kyrandia and the Lucasfilm biggies, Darkseed just about holds its own, with a compelling story containing plenty of interesting puzzles, lots of nice touches and an interface that ranks as one of the friendliest I've seen. There are flaws, however - there's a lot of to-ing and fro-ing between the same locations which is time consuming and, after a while, tedious. It would have been better to be able to skip between major locations via a map as in Monkey 2. Also, the rigorous time guidelines are unnecessary, imposing restrictions that the game could well do without. In a good adventure the player should be free to do what he likes, but in Darkseed it sometimes feels like you're playing to a timetable and if you're not in the right place at the right time, a vital clue or character may be lost forever. And is it long enough? Well, it's up to the individual but I'd guess it's unlikely to take you more than a couple of weeks to complete, not because of the complexity of the puzzles (some are very good indeed) but because actually not that big. But despite its teething troubles, Darkseed is an impressive debut for Cyberdreams, and it bodes well for the company's future releases.





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DRAGON'S LAIR III

The Curse Of Mordread

"Beep! Beep! Beep!" goes the Amiga. It can only mean one thing - Readysoft has released another of its so-called 'interactive cartoons'. David Upchurch is the man clutching the joystick...

(Left) With a name like Dirk the Daring you'd expect the hero to be partial to a bit of 'derring-do' - here he is swinging across the deck of a pirate ship, dodging flying bullets!

(Below) It wouldn't be right to have a game called 'Dragon's Lair' if the hero didn't encounter a dragon at some point, so sure enough there is one to keep the nit-pickers happy.



Poor old Dirk the Daring - he must've read the same fairy-tales I did. He probably thought "Smart! All I've got to do is rescue a beautiful princess from a fearsome fire-breathing reptile and I'll be sorted. Live happily ever after and all that." And so off he went, slayed Singe the Dragon, saved Princess Daphne from a fate worse than toast and built a little cottage out in the woods where he and Daffers could settle down. Ah, bliss.

If only life were that simple. As Dr Hook so rightly sang back in the 70s, when you're in love with a beautiful woman it's hard - and they weren't talking about what goes on in your trouser department either. The hideous wizard Mordroc took a fancy to Dirk's lovely lady and so kidnapped her and tried to force her to be his bride forever. After a titanic battle Dirk won through, put Mordroc to the sword and saved Daphne once again. But now Mordread, Mordroc's equally-ugly sister, wants revenge and so, once more, Dirk must triumph over evil and try to rescue his beloved in this, the fourth Readysoft game to star the dumb-witted knight.

It's not only the same old story it's the same old gameplay too. You watch a wonderfully-animated cartoon sequence and using your skill and judgement you have to decide when and how to move the joystick to respond to Dirk's current predicament. So is what we have here an interactive cartoon or an unplayable farce? Well, if you've ever played or read a review of one of these games before then you'll probably be able to guess what the answer to that quezzy is...







(Above) Death comes in many forms, including a giant moggy!

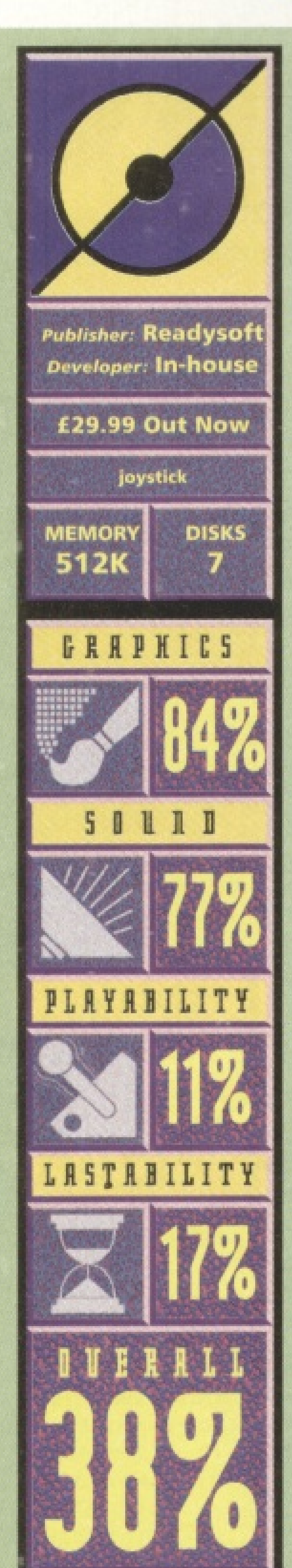
(Left) The first half of Dirk's adventure takes place in a weird land behind a looking glass - sure enough there are plenty of 'Alice In Wonderland'-inspired nasties.

(Right) Right from the start there's plenty of sword-slashing action, as Mordread sends a swarm of giant bats to deal with the brave knight, who's just come home from chopping fire wood to discover his beloved being kidnapped by the foul witch.



THE VERDICT

I could make my life very easy if I wanted to, you know. All I'd have to do would be to copy the Verdict verbatim from either of the previous Readysoft games, change any relevant names and - hey presto! - one brand-spanking-new review of Dragon's Lair III, no problems. Yes, it's the same old story - no playability, alas, but lots of groovy sound and pretty graphics to make up for it (though, if truth be told, even the visuals don't look as hot as they used to). Still, a lot of you seem to keep on forking out the cash for these games and I guess that as long as you do Readysoft will no doubt keep producing 'em, more's the pity. If I'm totally honest I can't be too harsh on you because, in a perverse way, I quite like them too. Admittedly there's no skill involved - simply try every permutation of the joystick until you find the move that works will never be an Olympic sport, let's face it - and there's no challenge either - by using the aforementioned method you should see the game's ending within two or three hours of intensive play. However, there is a definite addictivity in there somewhere, mainly thanks to the desire to see the next attractive animated scene. But the big 'But' in my case is that I'm in the fortunate position of getting these games for free as I have to review them (it's a hard life, I know). If I'd forked out thirty quid for one I'd feel a lot differently. If you're desperate for some high-quality graphical excellence why not save your cash for Flashback - at least that looks like it's going to have some playability.



AV8B HARRIER

Attention everybody! There's been a bit of a coup in Indonesia and it's about time it was sorted. Send in top pilot Simon Byron and his magnificent flying machine to save the day

World crisis! The globe is on the edge of destruction! Important stuff like that! The UN have had enough of the blokes involved in the coup which took place nearly five months ago and have passed one of those resolution-type things which always sound quite sinister. Saddam had loads of resolutions aimed directly at him and look what happened to him. Yeah, so what if he's still in power, torturing his civilians and building up a hefty stockpile of lethal weapons - we gave him a kicking he won't forget in a hurry and now it's the turn of these Indonesian scumbags.

According to the resolution, you're allowed to use any vessels, aircraft and personnel under your control and as much force as is necessary to overthrow the militants and generally save the day. And it just so happens that you're the commander of a whopping great aircraft carrier with almost as many Harrier Jump Jets than you could care to imagine.

The President wants you to keep the operation as low key as possible, however, but he probably thought that about the Arms For Hostages scandal so I shouldn't pay too much attention to him. Of course, there's always the chance that if you do mess up then he'll come round to your house for tea with Babs and vomit on your best china so perhaps it's worth bearing his wishes in mind.

So there you have it, then. Domark's AV-8B Harrier has finally landed and it sounds jolly great too. Trouble is, though, I must have Glue Ear or something because the reality is actually rather different.



VIEW TO A KILL

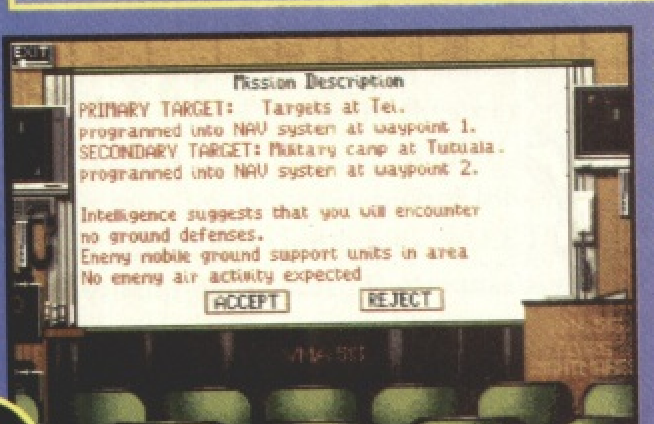
As is the norm with modern day flight simulations there are literally squillions of external views from which you can watch yourself flying. I've taken a few snapshots of myself in action with my trusty 35mm camera and they give a pretty good indication of the game's flight graphics. And no, the printers haven't messed up these pictures. Really, they haven't.

Here's me racing towards the target. Note the complete lack of graphical detail on my Harrier - good isn't it?

Swooping over the Carrier gives this wonderful shot. You'd almost believe that this was a real photo, wouldn't you?

This view shows the Aircraft Carrier in all its glory. Blue Peter made an exact replica of this from two cereal boxes.

Believe it or not, that attractive grey mass in the sky is actually me performing some dangerous stunts.



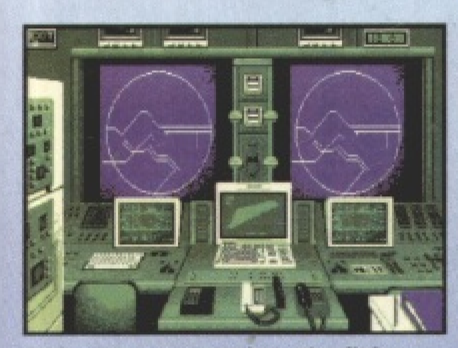
(Left) After deciding which mission to accept it's off to the Intelligence Briefing where all the necessary information that you need to successfully complete the mission is given. You'll be told your primary and secondary targets, the assigned waypoints and the defences you're likely to encounter.



(Right) Blimey! Here we are sitting inside a powerful Harrier atop a huge aircraft carrier (no more of your sad poems - Ed.). Taking off is relatively easy, just disengage the wheel lock, increase the thrust to full power and hang on to your trousers.



ASSAULT



Before you can get into the flying proper you have to buy a different game. Only joking! You'll have to wade through a few introductory screens, just to prolong the excitement. This is the Command Centre which contains the Tactical Amphibious Warfare Data System (called TAWADS for some reason) - it's the machine that you plan your battles on.



This is the TAWADS in full effect from which you can plan your battles, next thirty years of your life or anything else for that matter as this screen is tedious beyond extreme. Missions are given a strict starting time but no matter how quick you are with the mouse, the chances are that you'll just miss the scramble order and get stuck with patrolling the air.



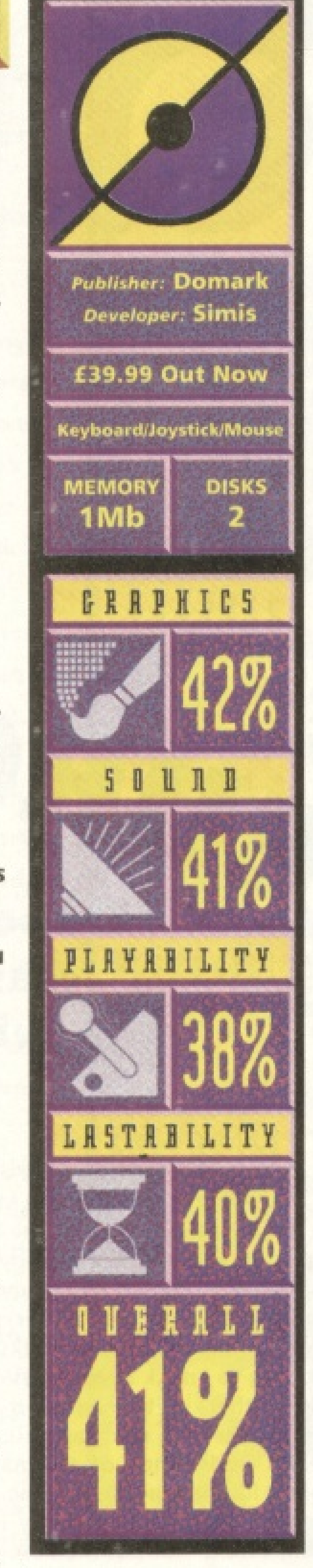
We're nearing the target now, a fixed base on Jaco Island, and it's time to think about how we're going to blow it up. (All getting very exciting, isn't it? No - the massed ranks of the readers.) Weapon selection is easy (just press backspace) and firing is even simpler (just press, er, fire). There are a number of available weapons which can be chosen before take-off, ranging from Iron Bombs to Sidewinders and Laser Guided Bombs.



If you sadly crash into the ground or are downed by enemy planes then the view changes to depict a random mass of pixels bouncing around the screen. Actually, I think that's supposed to be me in my super hi-tech aircraft - it's all atmospheric stuff, you know.

THE VERDICT

Before you actually play the game you need to format a floppy to create a data disk. After spending forty quid on a game, the least you expect is to have sufficient disks to play the game. Ten minutes of bogging about later and you're on the runway, excitement racing through your anxious body. Then, as you disengage the wheel lock and increase the thrust to maximum power, you realise that formatting a disk is far more adrenalin inducing than this game ever will be. There's absolutely NO impression of speed whatsoever - the game literally crawls along. If I cut off both my legs with a blunt knife and stapled my stumps to the floor I could still beat this 'simulation' round the block. At no point do you ever feel in control of one of the most sophisticated aircraft available - unless flying a Harrier is like carrying two huge weights on your ears when you're drunk. If you press the key to turn left, for example, it's at lest two seconds before any movement is registered by which time you've pressed the key again, doubling the amount you needed to turn. I cannot stress how SLOW this game is - even the mouse pointer crawls along at an embarrassing pace. The sound is minimal, the actual effects are terrible and as for the graphics, well... where do you want me to start? There's absolutely no depth to the landscapes, the external views are atrocious and as for the 'inspired' death scene - I thought somebody had gobbed grey stuff onto my monitor. The campaign aspect is pointless - even if it was implemented particularly well (which it isn't), I think that flight sim buyers don't want to be burdened with the preliminary procedures, they just want to take to the skies and kill things. My faith in life has been shattered by this game - it promised so much yet delivers so very little. I'm off for a bit of a cry.



Publisher: Domark
Developer: Simis

£39.99 Out Now

Keyboard/Joystick/Mouse

MEMORY	DISKS
1Mb	2

GRAPHICS	42%
SOUND	41%
PLAYABILITY	38%
LASTABILITY	40%
OVERALL	41%



EUROPEAN RAMPAGE

Ooooooooh yeeeeeaaah! After the disaster that was Wrestlemania, can Ocean redeem itself with its second WWF licence a year later? Gary Whitta is at ringside...

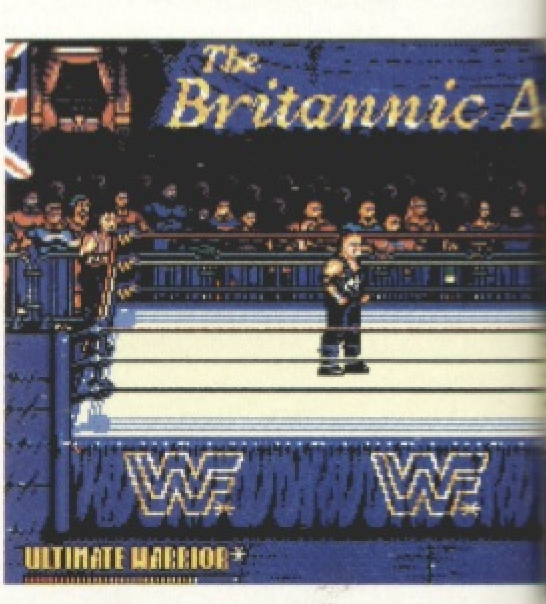
It's arguable that, like the annoyingly-successful Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles before it, the World Wrestling Federation is already starting to burn itself out as a youngster's fad. The sight of those ludicrously-dressed musclebound hulks pretending to knock seven bells out of each other in the squared circle seems like it's not capturing the hearts and minds of the nation's youth like it was just a few short months ago. Its popularity is certainly on the wane in the USA, which led to much of the sport's focus being transplanted to the relatively virgin European market in the form of a series of Euro tours, culminating earlier this year with the giant Summer Slam at Wembley Arena.

It's these 'European Rampages' which Ocean has, probably quite wisely, decided to base its second WWF game around, after the gameplay disaster that was Wrestlemania, last year's Christmas Number One. Given that with the WWF's fad factor on the slide, this will probably be Ocean's last licence in this direction, and the company has obviously decided to go out with a bang, having moved development teams (Arc Developments brought in to replace Twilight) and a consequent change in graphical and gameplay approach. WWF European Rampage revolves around a tag-team tournament that takes the player across the continent, battling various WWF bad boys before finally taking on the all-conquering Legion of Doom in Madison Square Gardens.

(Below) There's nothing particularly surprising about the way the wrestling works - the two combatants prance around the ring, then start smacking each other about when they come into contact. There's an impressive array of kicks, stomps, slaps and throws available, all of which are context-sensitive. For example, if you hit Fire while standing near the feet of a felled opponent you'll kick him in the stomach, while the same move near the head of the enemy executes an elbow drop.



WWF European Rampage offers several game variations. In the standard one-player mode, the player makes up his own tag-team by selecting the two partners from four WWF goodies - Hulk Hogan, Macho Man Randy Savage, The Ultimate Warrior or Bret 'Hit Man' Hart. In two-player the same rules apply, except each player controls one tag-team member, so only one player is in action at a time. If two players want to fight against each other they have to go to the practice arena, where the second player takes on the role of the Nasty Boys.

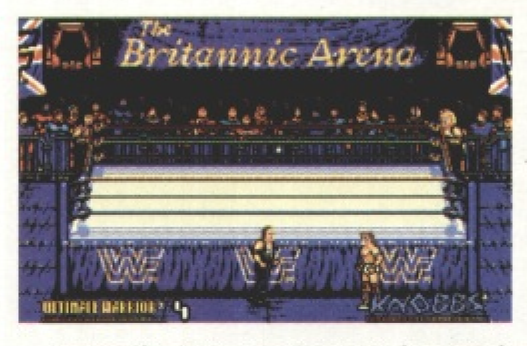




Each fighter has an energy bar, dimished in varying increments by successful moves on him by his opponent. A match-winning pin (when a wrestler's shoulders are held to the canvas for the count of three) can only normally be pulled off when a wrestler's energy is approaching zero. A wrestler with low energy is in serious danger of losing the next time he is felled, so it's a good idea at this stage to rush into your corner and 'tag' your waiting partner. At this stage he steps into the ring, allowing you to take a breather and recoup that lost energy. It's a shame, though, that both team members can't fight at the same time - much of the fun of the WWF is when a wrestler's partner enters the ring illegally to help a partner in trouble, often resulting in a chaotic free-for-all punch-up.

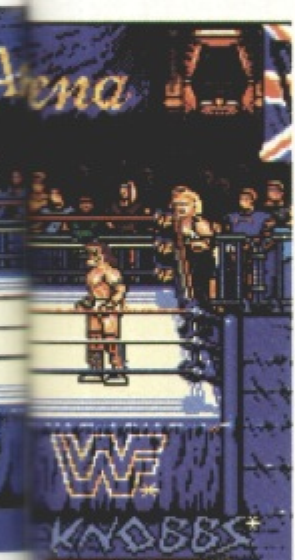


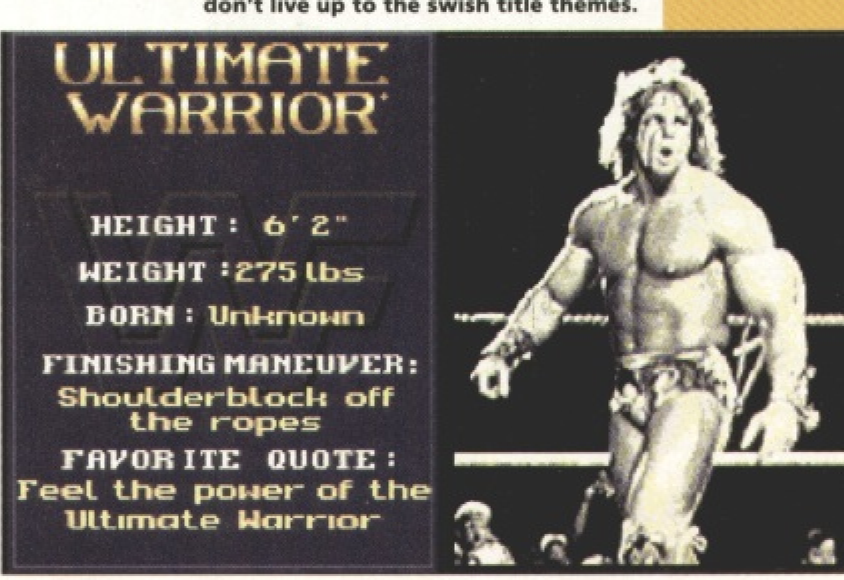
WWF news reporter Sean Mooney provides the build-up for each match in the tournament, starting in London against the Nasty Boys and moving across the continent before the final in New York. He also pops up at the end of a bout to give the result and, if you've lost and have some credits left, offer you a rematch.



As in the first game, the wrestling action can take place outside the ring as well as in. There are no chairs to hit your opponent with this time round, but falls to the floor will always hurt more than falls to the canvas. Remember not to spend more than ten seconds out of the ring, though, else you'll be counted out and lose the bout.

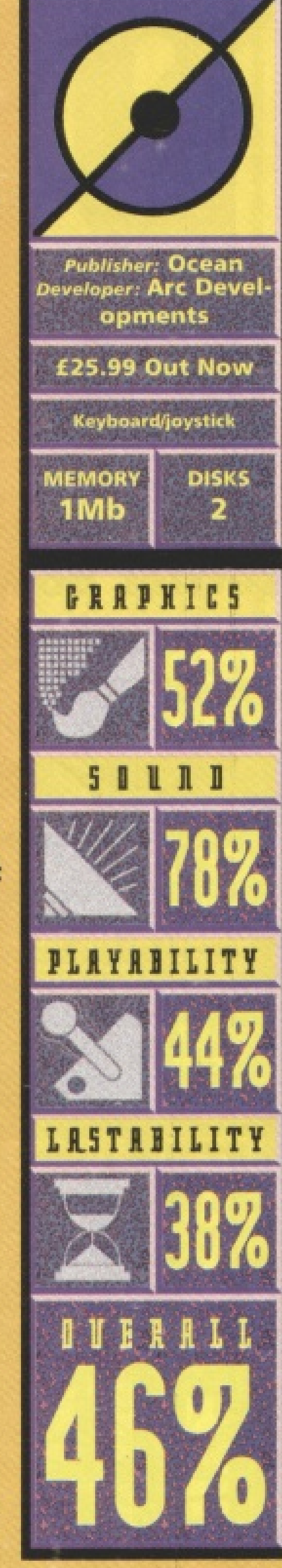
Leave the attract sequence to its own devices and it'll cycle through profiles of various WWF Superstars, including a digitised snapshot and a rudimentary biog (below). The character-based theme continues into the game's sonics, which include sampled snatchets of each of the superstars' theme tunes and other pleasing ditties - it's a shame the in-game effects don't live up to the swish title themes.





THE VERDICT

Oh dear. In going for a fairly different approach the second time around, Ocean and Arc have obviously tried to ring the changes with European Rampage and clear up some of the glaring gameplay flaws that afflicted Wrestlemania so horribly. The result, however, is a game that, though very different in look and feel, is only marginally better than the awful original. Let's look at what we have here: the smaller graphic scale, supposedly implemented so the entire ring could be seen at a time and cut down on confusion, is fine, but in reality it hasn't made things any less confusing or, for that matter, frustrating. The graphic artist deserves credit for getting the midget sprites to resemble their namesakes, but they have no character or weight as they drift around the ring like rejects from a Holiday On Ice special. Much of the time it's difficult to see just what is being done to who because the animation is so sketchy and indistinct. Also, the ring has no real depth to it, perhaps because it's viewed from too close to the floor, and as a result it's very difficult to judge moves like drop-kicks and the leap from the turnbuckle correctly. As you may have guessed by now, gameplay is not European Rampage's strong suit - in one-player mode particularly it's a very hit-and-miss affair, and only in two-player mode are there any glimpses of genuine entertainment. It's a shame, because the game does a lot of things right in other areas - the tag-team idea is a good one and presentation-wise it's very strong, doing a much better job of emulating the pomp and circumstance of the WWF than the original managed. But at the end of the day, WWF European Rampage is a heavily flawed game, and while legions of WWF fans will undoubtedly buy it, the rest of us are still waiting for a decent wrestling game on Amiga.



Publisher: Ocean
Developer: Arc Developments

£25.99 Out Now

Keyboard/joystick

MEMORY	DISKS
1Mb	2

GRAPHICS 52%

SOUND 78%

PLAYABILITY 44%

LASTABILITY 38%

OVERALL 46%

RAGNAROK

Grandmaster Simon Byron settles down for an absorbing game of Mirage's conversion of an ancient boardgame

Ragnarok refers to a point in time when the Gods will gather together for a right good scrap to purge the world of all things evil and make the earth a better place to live. Whether they extend this idea to include all the mortal heads of state is as yet undecided but I understand that the Queen has reservations, largely due to the fact that she's not so good at mud wrestling.

Odin, too, has his doubts as he's learnt that he is one of the Gods destined to be defeated in the battle so he modifies the ancient boardgame King's Table to include a number of special pieces which represent the Gods he'll be doing battle with. He figures that if he can become proficient enough at the game he'll have enough knowledge and experience to defeat his rivals and survive when the real battle commences.

Odin transforms himself into a raven (like you do), swoops down to earth, board under one wing and pieces in his beak, and pops into a local ale house to challenge the drunken earthlings and learn a few tactics or two. Odin must play, and beat, each challenger twice to gain enough experience and subsequently do a tad better in the ensuing scrap. I'd have popped down to the gym for a weight-training session and a quick swim but, then again, I'm not Odin. You are...

MEET THE GANG 'CAUSE THE GODS ARE HERE...

If you elect to play Ragnarok then you'll need to have a gander at the information below to assess the Special Pieces' strengths and weaknesses. You're allowed to select four out the possible six alternatives and learning how to use each God wisely is an essential route to success. If you'd like to make your choice, please:

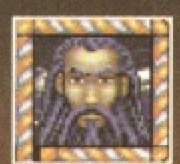
WHITE PIECES



THOR
Thor carries a hefty hammer and is another of the Gods due to die at Ragnarok. He can move to any square on the board occupied by an opponent and swap his life for theirs.



FREY
With a son who's the publisher of The One, Frey is a feared and mighty warrior. He can move diagonally in any direction for as many squares as he cares but cannot travel horizontally or vertically.



VIDAR
Vidar is destined to survive Ragnarok and, as such, can be reincarnated if he is taken. He can move two spaces horizontally or vertically and if captured must be placed back on one of the starting squares.



HEIMDALL
Our guest celebrity tonight is the star of a blockbusting Core game. Heimdall can move horizontally, vertically and even diagonally but only one square at a time.



VALKYRIES
Valkyries, being winged creatures, can fly through the air with style and grace. They can move horizontally or vertically two squares at a time and have the ability to leap over any piece in the first square.



TYR
One of the bravest Gods who lost his right hand during a fight with Fenrir, Tyr can move both vertically and horizontally for an unlimited number of squares.

BLACK PIECES

LOKI
Also known to his mates as the Shape Changer or the Wizard of Lies (obviously a nice bloke), Loki's devious cunning permits him to travel any number of spaces but only diagonally.



FENRIR
One of Loki's kids, Fenrir has almost the same abilities as the Valkyries. He can move two spaces horizontally or vertically and can leap over any piece in the first square.



JORMUNDGAND
This slimy creature can move an unlimited amount of squares horizontally or vertically and even move onto a square occupied by an opponent and exchange lives.



SURT
Super-tough Surt is strong but lumbering and, as such, can only move one square at a time. This is offset by the fact that he can move in any direction he pleases.



GARM
This dog has the responsibility of guarding the gates of Hell which makes him a very important piece. He can move an unlimited amount of squares in any direction.



HYRN
The captain of the ship which will take the Frost Giants to fight at Ragnarok. Far harder than Captain Birdseye, he can move two squares horizontally or vertically and can be replaced on the starting squares if taken.



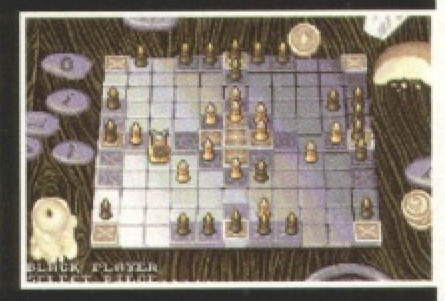
KING'S TABLE

Novices would do well to experience a few games of King's Table before they progress to the more complicated game of Ragnarok. In KT, there are no special pieces (except for Odin), just 'pawns' who can move any number of squares horizontally or vertically. Any piece which has an opponent either side of it (horizontally or vertically) is removed from the board and there are different objectives depending on which colour you're playing. Odin's side need to escort the God to one of the four corner squares whilst the black team need to stop him. The game tends to be far more free flowing than Ragnarok due to the easy rules and lack of animations.









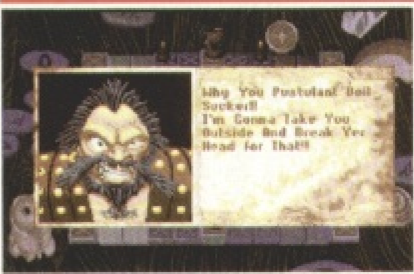
RAGNAROK

Right, once you're a competent King's Table player, it's time to move on to a man's game. Ragnarok is virtually the same as King's Table, save for the addition of 'special pieces' (see the seperate box). All of these pieces have different abilities and some of them need to be surrounded on three sides to be removed from the board. The objectives of the game remain the same but there are some optional animations and cameos which appear when a piece is taken.

If you're playing against the computer then you'll have to defeat all twelve opponents twice before you gain enough knowledge to survive the real Ragnarok. Unfortunately, though, one of the opponents is another God in disguise who's also destined not to survive the great battle and he'll even cheat to beat you.









THE VERDICT

There's only so much you can do to make a strategy/boardgame look interesting so you could be forgiven for not thinking this game is particularly good. Well, looks aren't everything, you know, and in the same way that the Hunchback of Notre Dame was a top geezer below the surface, Ragnarok is a fine game. The two versions that are included in the computer incarnation work well and give the player time to build up confidence and tactics for the big challenge. Obviously it's a game which is very much like Chess (and most people who have a good understanding of Chess will no doubt become very proficient at Ragnarok) but there are many subtle differences between the two. It's a really absorbing game which is challenging and addictive - but, like I say, only if you're 'into' this type of game. There are a couple of bad points, however. The animations are drab and uninteresting and soon become a bore and I'm sure that they will be turned off by the end of the first game. There's no need for them to be included in the game in the first place - people who appreciate intelligent pursuits certainly won't be impressed and if you don't like these games then dull and jerky anims will be of no consolation to you, especially if you've spent £34.99 on it. There should have definitely been an option to view the game directly from above as, on occasions, it's hard to see exactly what piece is what and where the cursor is. Overall, though, Ragnarok is an excellent game BUT (and it's a big 'but' as you can see, but then capital letters usually are) whereas I'm into these games (I'm a bloody intellectual, y'know) you might not be. Think before you purchase.

Publisher: Mirage
Developer: Imagitec Design

£34.99 Out Now

Keyboard

MEMORY	DISKS
1Mb	2

GRAPHICS	83%
SOUND	78%
PLAYABILITY	84%
LASTABILITY	82%
OVERALL	82%

EURO SOCCER

There's an old gypsy saying which states "You can never have too many football games". Simon Byron disagrees...

Over the past year or so Amiga owners have been bombarded with more footy game than in the entire history of the computer. With the exception of two, Sensible Soccer and John Barnes, all the rest have been and gone without much impact, destined for the land of compilations and budget releases. What with Goal, FA Premier League Football (see Previews) and Sensible Soccer 2, it seems as if this trend is set to continue.

To tide you over until the Spring/Summer rush, though, Flair have kindly released Euro Soccer. Unlike the games based around last year's hopeless European Championships, Euro Soccer features an imaginary tournament in which all the top league teams from seven European countries compete for a fictitious trophy. What the criteria for a 'top team' is, however, completely baffles me as Manchester City, Manchester United and Arsenal have all been included among the British sides. Where the flipping heck are QPR and AFC Bournemouth, then?

As you've probably gathered from the screenshots, unlike Sensible Soccer, Euro Soccer is a sideways-scrolling affair. You can play against a friend or the computer (no surprises there) but only one person can compete in the tournament, which is a bit odd. Gary reckons that any game which has bothered to include TV cameramen on the sidelines must be rubbish so let's see if he's right, shall we?

The grainy-looking pitch is where the bulk of the game takes place (if you can call it a game). Of course, a static screenshot can't accurately convey the speed of the game, which is just as well as you don't really want to know. Interesting Euro fact number 1: There are no penalties for fouling in the area - this 'unnecessary' feature is only present in the PC version!



After a few hours of running towards the goal you should be able to stick the ball in the net. The delighted player then appears in the bottom right hand corner of the screen and performs a victory 'dance' which features a full TWO FRAMES of animation!



You choose teams from these seven countries and each side has its strengths and weaknesses (apparently). You can also select which of the three available formations you wish to play but none stop the computer-controlled players from wandering aimlessly around the pitch.

THE VERDICT

A.R. Guest, a concerned parent, sent us a letter the other day which disagreed with the 'naughty' words that we occasionally use in the mag. Well, A.R., you should skip the rest of this Verdict because it's going to contain some pretty strong stuff, starting with 'crap' in the next sentence. Euro Soccer is crap, you've got more control over the population of Africa than the ball in this game. It's often a case of 'press the button and gamble away' with regards to passing, as the ball always travels to the nearest player you're facing, not matter how far away he is. One moment it'll travel about half a metre and the next it'll be right up the other end of the pitch. 'Playability' is obviously a word that isn't in Flair's dictionary (if it is then they've got it confused with 'bad programming'). The players are uncontrollably slow and they often perform a number of stupid automatic moves, like chesting the ball away if it arrives at shoulder height, which is worrying. Computer controlled players have a disturbing habit of running away from the ball whenever it nears them, making the defence look like stupid and they generally act with little intelligence. Aftertouch, diving headers and bicycle kicks are about as existent as Macaulay Culkin's talent - the entire match consists of milling about, attempting a few 'graphically-challenged' sliding tackles and running with the ball as if it's nailed to your athlete's foot. Even the crowd sound as if they're embarrassed to be in a game this bad - all they seem to be able to muster up is a monotone "Uuuuuuurh!" all the bloody time (sorry A.R.). Buy Sensible Soccer. Buy Sensible Soccer. Buy Sen...

Publisher: Flair
Developer: Creative Edge

£25.99 Out Now

joystick

MEMORY	DISKS
1Mb	2

Rating	Score
GRAPHICS	38%
SOUND	32%
PLAYABILITY	28%
LASTABILITY	16%
OVERALL	26%

SLEEP

Money from every copy of Ocean's arcade puzzler is going to Comic Relief. But would you be better off just making a hefty donation and giving the game a miss? David Upchurch finds out. But first, over to Fab FM with Mike Smash and Dave Nice...

I don't know about you, mate, but there's nothing I enjoy more than a quiet night in playing with a young friend on my Amiga.

Too true, Smashy. Amigas are pop-a-disk-in-the-drive-tastic! So what've you been waggling your joystick to recently, mate?

Glad you asked, Nicey. It's a game by the name of Sleepwalker from those close personal friends of mine at Ocean...

...Do a lot of work for charidee, apparently, but don't like to talk about it...

...Great blokes, one and all. Except for the young ladies there, of course, who, er, aren't, er, blokes but are, er, great too.

I love ladies in the software business, don't you mate? They're equal-opportunities-for-both-sexes-mungous!

(Confused) ...Er... yeah.

So tell me, Smashy, what's this Sleepwalker you've all been telling us about, er, about then?

It's about a dog named Ralph...

Lovely name for a lovely doggy!

...Who has to protect his young friend Lee who's gone sleepwalking from coming a cropper in all sorts of weird landscapes.

Sounds one-lemming-and-his-dog-tastic, mate!

You're not wrong there, mate. And, best of all, for every game sold £4.32 goes to charidee.

(Serious) Yes, charidee. As John, Paul, George and, er, Ringo so rightly sang, "Money. That's what I want." And, of course, although they sang "I" they really meant Comic Relief.... Er, right Smashy?

You're on your own here, mate.

(Perking up) I love a good laugh, don't you Smashy?

Too true, Nicey. But I prefer a good rock better. And who better to rock with than Bachmann Turner Overdrive with "You Ain't Seen Nothing Yet." Let's rock!

(Thinking they're off air) So, tell me Smashy. When did you get your copy of Sleepwalker, then?

Last night. Got it from of my great pirate mates. Didn't cost me a penny.

Oh...

FLYING THROUGH THE DANGER ZONES

Sleepwalker consists of six huge levels, with a bonus level between each (assuming you've collected all the correct icons). Here they are in, as some would have you believe, 'full'...



THE CITY

There are a million stories in the naked city. This is one of them... The clamber across the rooftops leading from Lee's open-windowed bedroom makes for a relatively gentle start to Ralph's adventure. The biggest dangers here are busy main roads (which have all-night traffic buzzing along them), over-eager dog catchers and brutish nightclub bouncers.



THE ZOO

This is more of a wildlife safari park than a zoo, with all breeds and species of savage beasts living in perilously-close proximity. While some of the animals, like snakes and water-spraying elephants, pose a big threat, others, like giraffes, can actually give Ralph a helping hand, or rather neck...



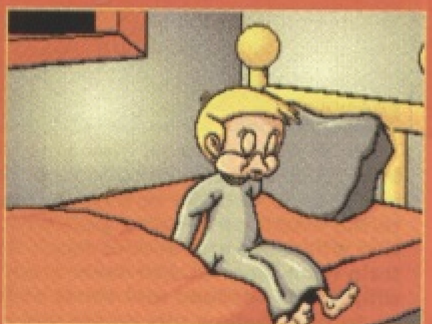
WALKER

A BOY AND HIS DOG

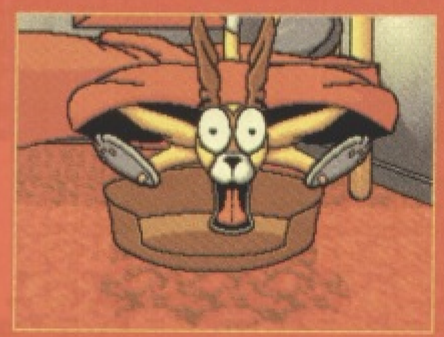
A Tail For Children



Across the town there's not a peep,
All the citizens are fast asleep.



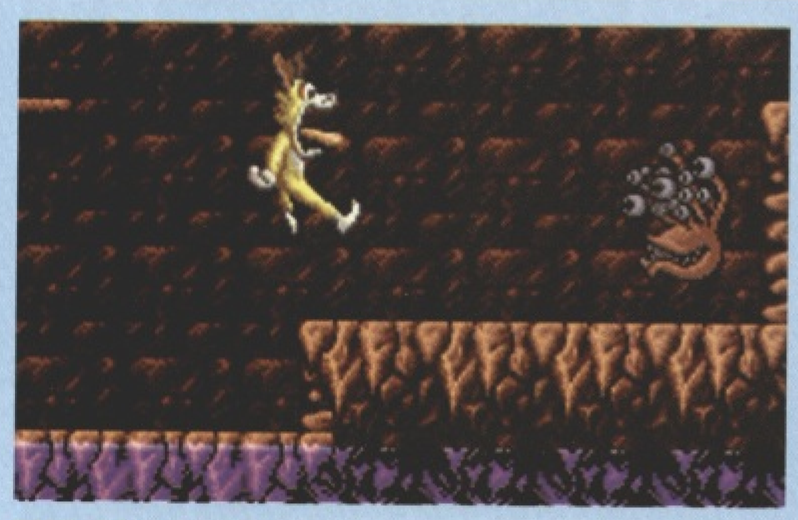
Except for Lee, a tiny tot,
He's up and off, like a shot.



Sleepy Ralph can't believe his brain,
His master's off sleepwalking again!

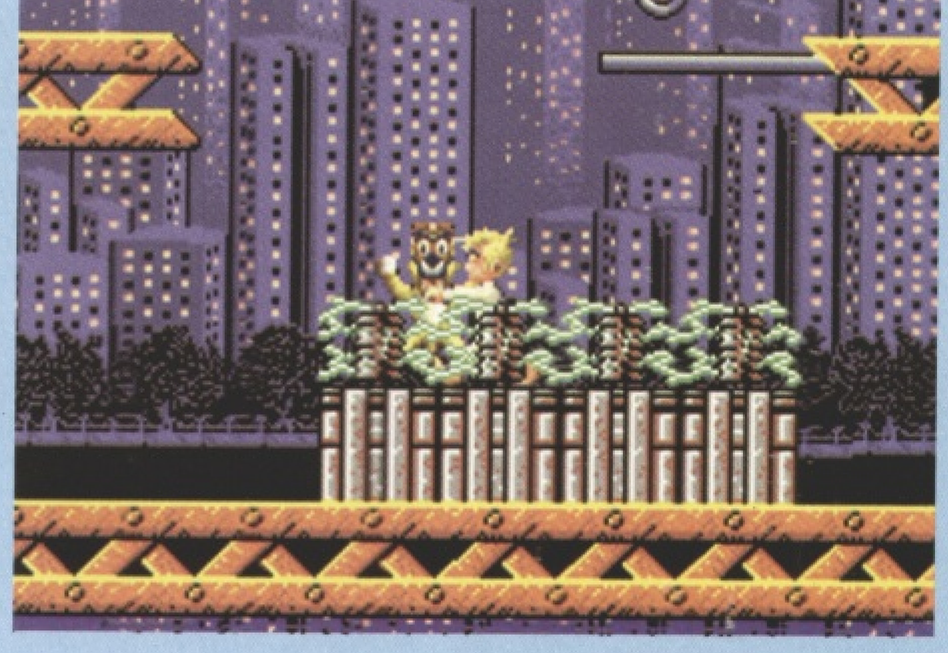


Out of the window steps young Lee,
"Hang on!" cries Ralph. "Wait for me!"



THE GRAVEYARD

Ralph does his famous Scooby-doo impression here, as he tries to guide Lee past all kinds of horrific ghoulies and ghosties with not even a Scooby Snack to reward him. The biggest threats here are ethereal Beholder-like geezers (which scare Ralph out of his wits for a lengthy amount of time) and giant fire-breathing monster things.



THE FACTORY

Those platform-game staples, conveyor belts and lifts, make a heavy appearance here. It takes all of Ralph's arcade skills to stop Lee from either walking into a furnace, getting crushed under a piledriver, scattered to the four winds by turbine fans or being poached by a leaky steampipe.



THE CONSTRUCTION SITE

You must've seen a cartoon like this, where some short-sighted or sleepwalking bloke goes meandering through a building site, ambling along precariously-perched scaffolding beams and so on, totally oblivious to the danger he's in. What a hoot.

THE CITY (again)

Ralph's on the final stretch now. Just a few more obstacles to guide Lee past and he can return to his basket and some well-earned forty winks. This dustbin-lid-banging cat, however, is determined to ruin Ralph's plans...

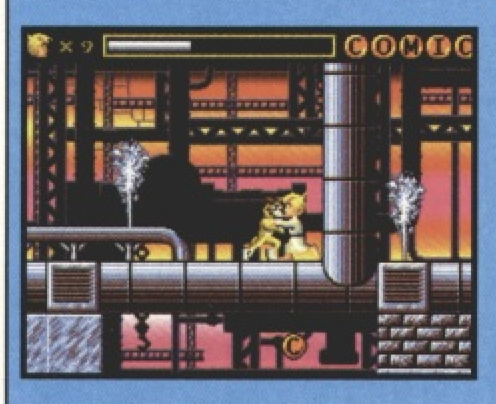


You control Ralph, Lee's faithful companion, and it's your job to keep Lee out of trouble. Although you have no direct control over the troublesome young lad you can influence his wandering movements. By pushing into him you can grab him and keep him at a stand-still. Then, once grabbed, you can turn him around and set him off walking away in the direction he came from. You can also give Lee a boot up the backside to bounce him up to higher platforms. The player's control over Ralph and Lee is clever, being wide-ranging yet instinctive to use



Being such a devoted doggy (are there any other kind?), Ralph will go to any lengths to make sure his young master doesn't come to any harm, even to the extent of bridging gaps with his own body! It's like that bit in the film where Superman does much the same thing to save a speeding express train from disaster. Lee never stops walking - if he bumps into a wall he simply turns around and starts walking the other way. It is possible, however, to find shallow pits where you can leave Lee milling back and forth while you scout ahead to deactivate traps or deal with nasties.

BONUS BONKERS!



While Ralph is racing around the landscapes, it's worth keeping an eye out for these special Comic Relief noses with a letter on them. As here, though, it's often very easy to see them but a very different matter altogether to get to them. Anyway, collect the set to spell 'COMIC' in the score bar at the top of the screen and at the end of the level you'll be transported to a special bonus level...



These bonus levels are a totally different kettle of fish to the main game. Against the clock you have to solve word puzzles by collecting the symbols floating around in the air in the correct order. Here, for example, you have to collect the pump, then the '+', then the king, then the '-' and then the 'G'. Do you get it? PUMP + KING - G = PUMPKIN! This can get a touch confusing, especially since there are six words to find, but related icons tend to be grouped near each other so it never gets too hard.



Depending on which puzzles you solved you get rewarded with some short animations which show what Ralph, if he weren't such a lovable pup, wishes would happen to the Lee. The animations are related to the puzzles, so if you found the word PUMPKIN, for example, you'd see a gag about Lee getting a pumpkin falling on his head. Or something. There's a bonus for the number of puzzles you solve and if you solve them all on every bonus level there is, we're told, a special surprise at the end of the game.



Certain hazards, like open furnaces or trapdoors, can be easily made safe by Ralph running over them. As Lee progresses through the levels, however, things get a little more complex, with Ralph having to push blocks over spike traps or use special objects to defeat certain nasties. Take this creature, for example. It's actually a vampire (if Ralph walks into it he gets turned into a bat!), so by pushing the cross into it (found elsewhere on the level) Ralph can send it back to hell.

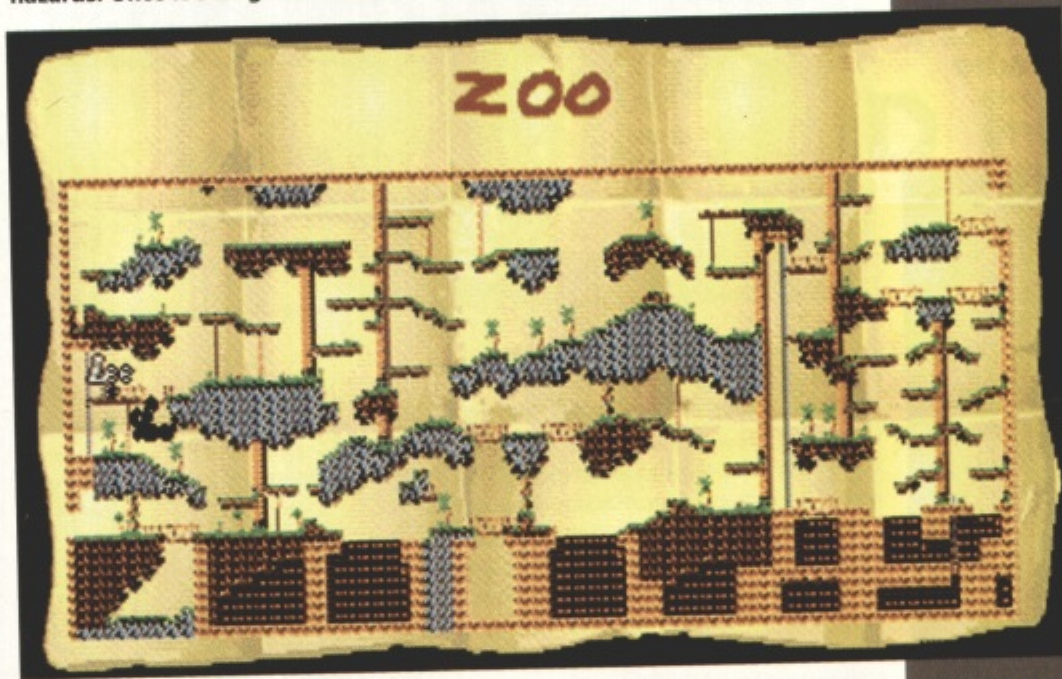


Although Ralph does seem to spend most of his time being burnt and beaten up, he's not entirely defenceless. With his club he can deal with the more fleshy obstacles to Lee's progress like this giant boa constrictor. Generally speaking dazed nasties like this come round after a minute or so, so don't think you can leave Lee in a safe spot, go through the whole level sorting out the bad guys, set Lee on his way and then sit back and relax.

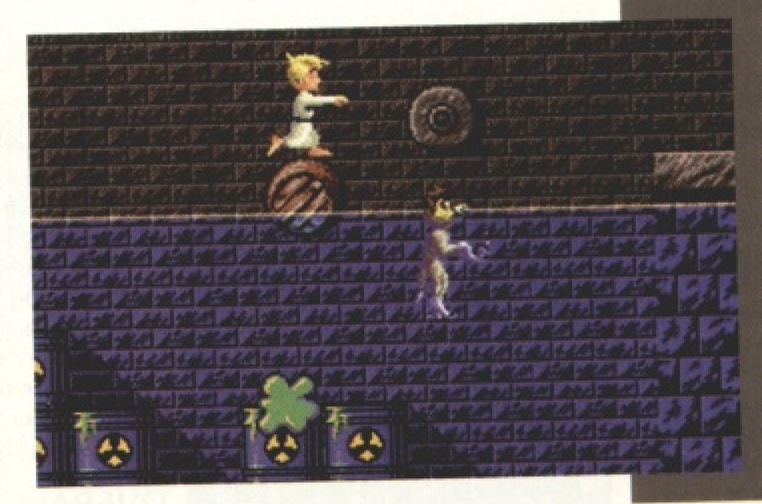




There's no time limit during the main game, so you've got no excuse (apart from Lee just about to fall into a lava pit) for not exploring the far reaches of the levels in search of those bonus-level-revealing red noses. Ralph has no 'energy bar', either - no matter how hard he gets whacked he'll always bounce back, after a short delay. The bar at the top of the screen indicates how deeply asleep Lee is and it's gradually depleted by walking into hazards. Once it's all gone he wakes up and Ralph has to start over again.



There are a number of handy icon collectibles. One of the best is the dunce's hat, which gives you a complete map of the current level that can be called up at any time. The whoopee cushion, on the other hand, gives whoever picks it up limited invulnerability and since Ralph is pretty much invincible anyway it's best left for weedy Lee. Some icons, like the custard pie, create paths or bridges past particularly nasty parts of the map, but only for a short amount of time.



The biggest threat to Lee's slumber is water. Even one drop depletes his 'sleep bar' by a frightening amount, and deep pools like this will drain it all in one fell swoop. Ralph, on the other hand, can doggy paddle around without penalty. If there's the opportunity it's worth pushing up against the underwater walls, as there are often hidden tunnels to bonus-filled secret rooms.

THE VERDICT

My main problem with Sleepwalker is that every level is just too big and sprawling. It's sooo frustrating when you've struggled to manoeuvre Lee past a series of nasty obstacles only to make one mistake and have him hurled way, way back so that you have to do it all over again. I know, I know, that's the whole point of the game but it can get very annoying, believe me. At least there's no time limit - that would make matters even worse. In some ways, however, that's another fault, as it means there's no real tension. Rather than six big levels I'd have preferred lots of smaller, more linear ones, with a time factor to egg you on. As it stands the game seems a little unfocussed and full of hair-pulling frustration but little addictive tension. That's not to say Sleepwalker's a duffer - far from it, in fact. Despite the occasional annoying bits it is fun to play, and there's a genuine feeling of satisfaction when you finally reach the end of a level. The bonus levels are a good idea, too, and make for a much-needed change of pace. Although the graphics tend to be a bit dark and drab, the animations are superb. In places Sleepwalker feels more like a Tex Avery cartoon rather than a computer game, especially when Ralph gets whacked on the head and waddles around like a walking pancake. All in all, Sleepwalker a fine game; it's just that you can't help thinking that with a few tweaks here and there it could have been a classic, rather than just very good. Still, at least it's all for charidee...



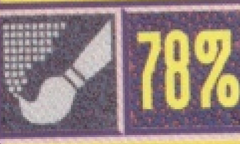
Publisher: Ocean
Developer: CTA Developments

£25.99 Out Now

Joystick

MEMORY	DISKS
1Mb	3

GRAPHICS



78%

SOUND 83%

PLAYABILITY 84%

LASTABILITY 86%

OVERALL 84%

CHEAPOS!

Bonjour, ca va? For some reason we've all turned slightly French here at The One and I can't quite think why. Oh yes, it's a lame excuse to write an easy intro to the new Cheapos section. New? Yes, we've decided that Simon's getting too much of a good thing by playing all the latest top budget releases so we've all taken turns writing the reviews and you'll find that the initials after each one relate to who reviewed the game. You'll have to work out who's who for yourselves, though.



GEM'X

Global Software £7.99

Gem'X is a puzzle game which involves manipulating your set of gems (on the left of the screen) until they match, in colour and position, the set of gems on the right. This is achieved by devaluing a desired gem which, in turn, affects those around it. There's a colour sequence and if a gem is clicked on then it will change 'down' two colours (i.e. from green to pink). The gems surrounding the devalued jewel (not including the diagonals) will change to the next colour in the sequence and if a gem is devalued below yellow then it will implode,



causing all the stones above it to drop down into the empty spaces.

Sounds complicated? You're right, but it's this appeal which drives the game along. There are



ROBOCOP 2

The Hit Squad £7.99

In terms of quality Robocop 2 falls somewhere between the other two Robocop games - while it's not as stunningly original as Robocop 3 (arguably the best movie tie-in ever) it's nowhere near as sad as the platform-patheticness that was Robocop (arguably the worst movie tie-in ever).

The premise this time around is that a lethal new designer drug, Nuke, is causing chaos on the streets of Old Detroit. It's Robo's job to round up the dealers in his own special way (i.e. shoot them through the head) and finally defeat their leader, the vicious Cain. What this all boils down to is loads of clanking around platforms, blasting the bad guys, collecting the power-ups and so on. Between levels there are bonus sub-games to tackle, such as target practice at a shooting range and connecting silicon chips on a circuit board.

Sound familiar? It should do - all that Robocop 2 offers you is more of what you got in the first Robocop game, but the redeeming quality here is that it's been done by someone who at least knows how to half-



program an Amiga. The sprites are nice n' big, although Robo seems to have put on a bit of weight (must be all those silicon chips - Arf! Arf!), and the scrolling's all lovely n' smooth. It offers a strong challenge too - a little too strong at times, if we're being honest - so you should easily get your money's worth out of it. If you're after some no-frills blasting entertainment, you won't go far wrong with this. [DU]

OVERALL: 86%

400 levels which increase in complexity. Most only require a few well-placed clicks to complete but one wrong move can mean the loss of a life and a serious shin-kicking session. Whilst this 'one mistake and it's all over' business may sound a touch harsh, there's an option to undo the last move, so with careful planning most levels are eventually solveable.

Gem'X is exquisitely presented. This is partly thanks to Kiki, a Japanese foxtress, who guides you through the levels with saucy speech (the game begins with the lovely lady whispering "I love you") and, erm, suggestive static pictures. The sound effects are brilliant, the music is excellent and the gameplay is infuriatingly addictive (it's one of the few game's that's had me sneaking into the games room for a crafty go). It's also got a handy password system so you've got no excuse for not playing Gem'X through until the bitter end, where you'll be rewarded with, and I quote, "a big surprise!" [SB]

OVERALL: 88%

THE POWER

Global Software £7.99

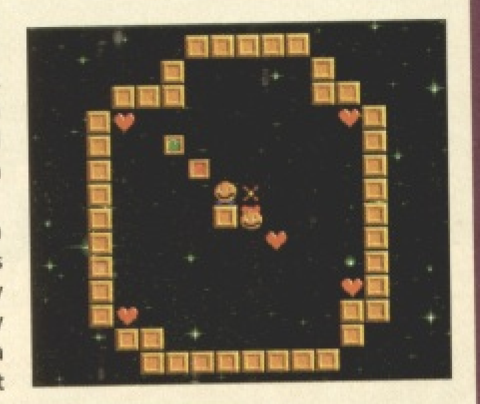
Max is a romantic blob who'll stop at nothing to be reunited with his lovely (and also blob-like) Mini. It's a good job his devotion is as sincere as it is because Max has to travel through fifty locations before he'll be with his loved one again.

These levels take the form of a slidey puzzle-type game in which blob-face must collect all the red hearts located in the level before nudging up to the static Mini. As is the norm in this genre, Max keeps on moving in the direction he's sent until he bashes into a block or the edge of the playing area. There are usually a few movable blocks scattered about the place which can be projected in exactly the same way as Max and can be used to allow Maxie to reach previously inaccessible areas.

This is all well and good but, unfortunately, the control method is way out of date. To actually move Max around the level requires a good deal of unnecessary joystick wrestling which could have been avoided had a little more care and attention been lavished at the design stage.

The Power also suffers from attempting to be too glossy for it's own good and the many scrolly menus or title screens that slowly reveal themselves soon become a bore. The fifty levels certainly won't take that long to complete but there is a two-player head-to-head mode and a level designer to satisfy die-hard Power fans if you need more action. It's not an essential purchase by any means but it should pass the time fairly adequately. Oh, the music's quite good as well. [SB]

OVERALL: 53%



FIRE AND FORGET

Fox Hits £9.99

Oh dear, oh dear. It's games like this that make you realise how lucky we are in the 90s - I don't remember too clearly (my memory's not what it was), but if this is what was being dished out as full-price entertainment in the 'good old days' of the Amiga, you can take them and stick them where the sun doesn't shine. Fire and Forget is, not to put too fine a point on it, awful. Crap. Rubbish. Cack. Poo-poo. Need I go on?

Well, alright then. This regurgitated French plop-plop from the late 80s has come back to haunt us in budget form, spinning some unlikely yarn about how a global apocalypse can only be averted by you getting in a state-of-the-art James Bond car and driving about a bit and blowing things up. The presentation and blurb is promising at least, giving the impression that there's going to be carnage on a very impressive scale once you get going. Unfortunately, all you get once you do get going is some of the dullest, slowest and most unplayable racing 'action' it's ever been my misfortune to have to endure.



The object on each level is simply to get to the end of the course, blowing up as much as possible along the way, without running out of fuel. The graphics, however, are abysmal, consisting of an intolerably-jerky road that the car doesn't even look like it belongs on and an assortment of poorly-defined objects that come and go so fast it's impossible to figure out what they were meant to be until its too late. And considering that your car is supposed to be the latest state-of-the-art battle machine, you'd think that it would be able to survive a collision with a tumbleweed or rock - but no. Everything on the road is deadly to the touch, resulting in numerous explosions and the inevitable GAME OVER message flashing up, on average, about twenty seconds after the start of each game. Oh well, maybe we should be thankful for small mercies.

Make no mistake - this game is dirge of the highest order, and you'd make better use of a £10 note by wiping your bottom on it and flushing it down the toilet than buying this pile of drivel. And this from the same people who brought us Crazy Cars III? Funny old world, innit? [GW]

OVERALL: 13%





OOOPS UP

Global Software £7.99

Our memory of the event is a tad hazy, but apparently The One gave Ooops Up a 91% rating when it appeared on full-price many moons ago. Times change, however, and so do gaming standards, and unfortunately this game, though still a charmer in the playability stakes, hasn't grown old very gracefully. What we have here is little more than an uninspired but nevertheless competent rip-off of Ocean's Pang, where a little man runs along the bottom of the screen bursting bouncing balloons with a harpoon gun, in a cross between Asteroids and Space Invaders. In Ooops Up, however, you travel not around the world but around the universe, visiting various planets and destroying the spherical asteroids that replace Pang's balloons. For each planet you clear you win a piece of a spaceship - collect all 99 parts and you can go home, or something.

Graphics aside, there's very little to differentiate Ooops Up from the coin-op conversion that it so obviously plagiarises - even the power-ups (time freeze, extra weapons, etc) and extra features (ladders and platforms to run about on) are identical. And with Pang already available on budget, comparisons are unavoidable. And in this test Ooops Up comes off the worse...

On paper there's not much in it, but once you've played both it becomes clear that the original is still the best, boasting smoother control, nicer presentation and a higher level of polish all round. Ooops Up is a nice game, but even with its smart sampled rendition of the Snap record of the same name, there's really no reason to buy this so long as Pang is available. We think you get the message. [GW]

OVERALL: 77%



ADRENALYNN

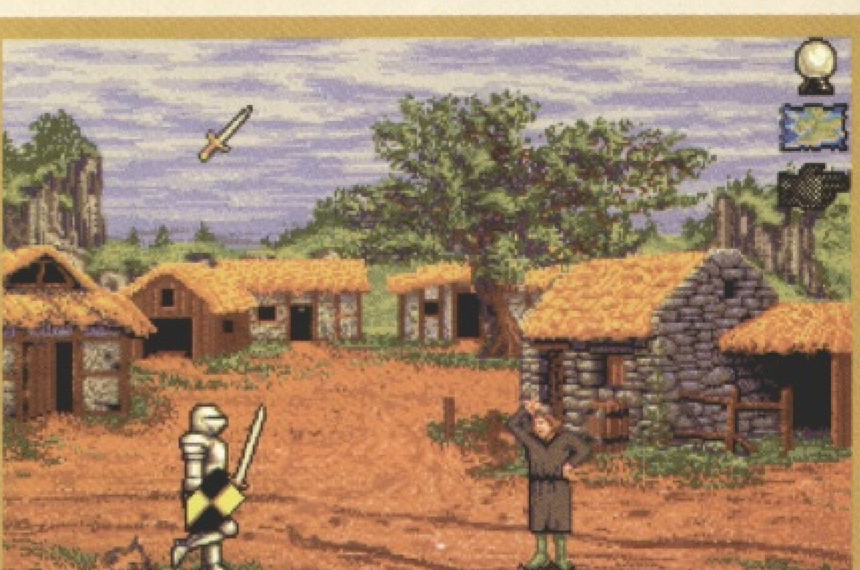
Global Software £7.99

Another in a long line of 'sport of the future' games, Adrenalynn is best described as a cross between Speedball and Projectyle - unfortunately, however, this offering lacks the style and playability of either of those two futuristic favourites. Played over a scrolling steel arena (sound familiar?) Adrenalynn pits two teams of two players, each on a floating circular hoverboard, against each other, with the object simply to slam the ball into the opponent's goalmouth as many times as possible. The ball sticks to players via a magnetic field, so once you've got a hold of it, all you have to do is make it down the pitch, avoiding the attentions of the enemy (players are tackled simply by bumping into them) and lobbing it in.

This is very basic stuff. Although it borrows ideas from games like Speedball, it has a feel all of its own, which is curiously like a mix of Dodgems and Air Hockey - it's chaotic and there's lots of bumping and crashing into walls, a product of the small pitch size and somewhat over-reactive inertial control. Teams can be made up of any combination of computer-controlled or human players, with four-player games possible by means of a four-way joystick adaptor, so there's plenty of potential for group fun.

The fun is short-lived while playing solo, however, partly because the speed of the game means you spend





Like most compilations, Strategy Masters consists of a couple of quality titles padded out by some very mediocre ones. The bulk of Strategy Masters is provided by Chess Player 2150 (a decent-enough Chess game), Battle Master (a rather dull but solid RPG-cum-wargame in a fantasy setting) and Spirit of Excalibur (another competent RPG-cum-wargame based around Arthurian legend marred by endless disk accessing). All okay stuff, but hardly mouth-watering. However, the other two games more than make up for them...

half the time off the screen and trying to reposition yourself using the radar scanner.

Adrenalynn isn't a bad little game, and if you've got a pal to team up with, there should be a week or so of decent fun to be had here. However, it really doesn't have that much going for it in the lastability stakes (some uninspired power-up icons don't do much to alleviate the boredom once it sets in) and, impressive soundtrack aside, Adrenalynn comes across more like a piece of highly-polished PD rather than eight quid's worth of software. [GW]

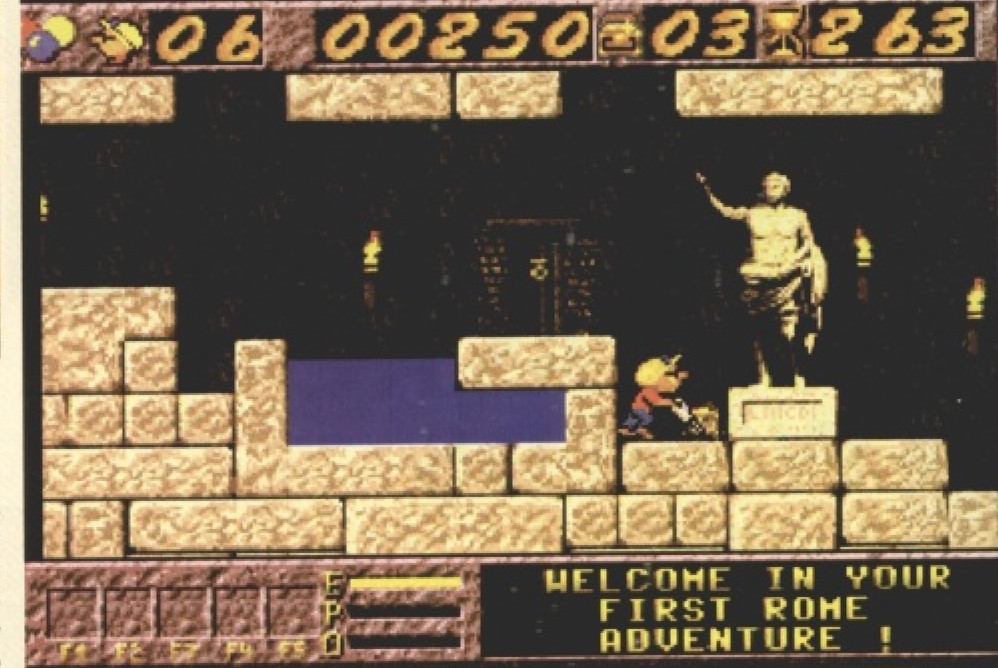
OVERALL: 54%



P.P. HAMMER AND HIS PNEUMATIC WEAPON

Demonware £7.99





It's all a load of blocks, is P.P. Hammer. Little stone blocks, to be precise, which add puzzle-type complications to what is essentially a simple but nicely-done platform game. The hero P.P. is an Indiana Jones-type on a treasure hunt in a series of Egyptian tombs. He must find all the treasure before the limited air supply runs out, whereupon the door to the next chamber opens.

Fairly standard stuff, to be sure. But, in addition to the usual platform perils such as pits, spikes, conveyor belts (in an Egyptian tomb?), snakes, rats and acid pools, P.P. often finds his way forward barred by crumbly blocks. By whipping out his 'weapon' (a pneumatic road drill, to be precise, so stop sniggering at the back) he can smash them into dust and progress. He has to be quick, though, as the blocks reappear and may trap or crush him. There's a small arcade adventure element too, where P.P. has to find keys to open certain doors.

It's a nice concept and quite absorbing. However, it's a little too easy to get caught in a dead end for my liking, through no real fault of your own. At least there's a password system so that once you've cleared a particularly annoying level you can skip past it in the future. The game's biggest fault is that it's perhaps a little too simple to give you much lasting fun. Still, at the £7.99 asking price you can't really complain. [DU]

OVERALL: 73%

STRATEGY MASTERS

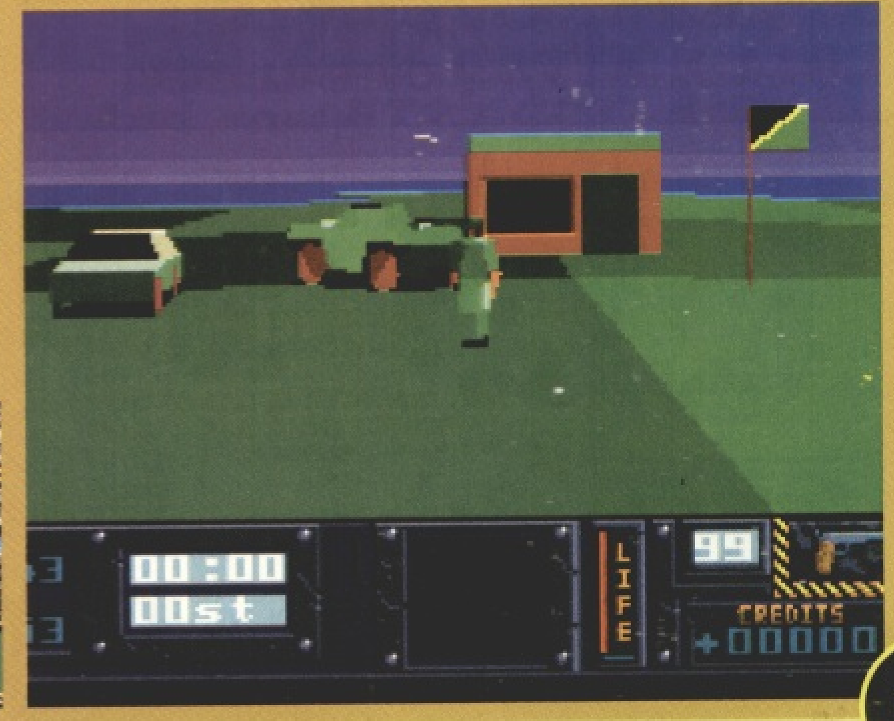
Ubisoft £35.99

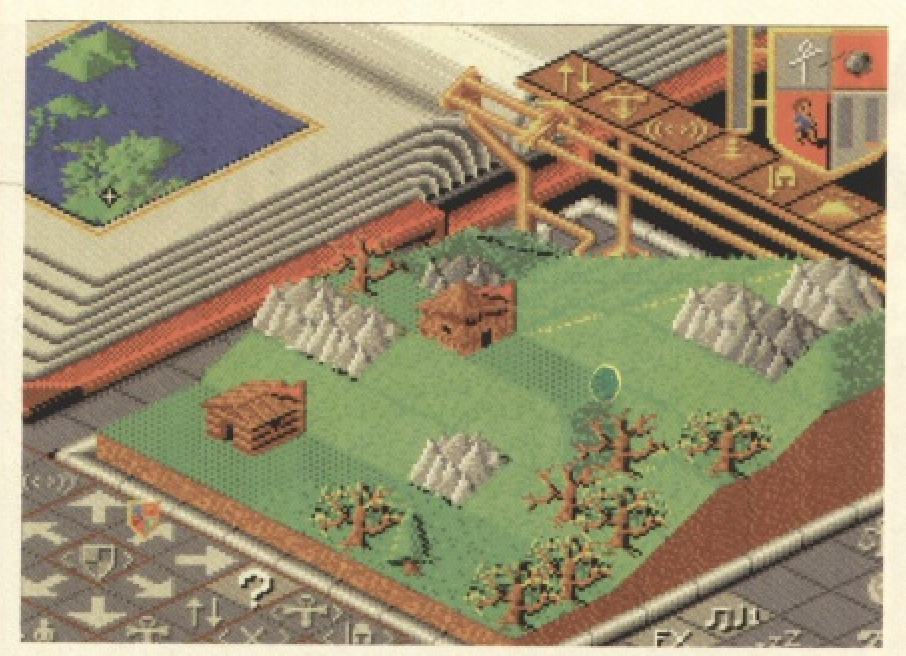
The big name in the pack is undoubtedly Populous, the classic God sim. Even now, a good three years after its original release, it still plays well although technically it's been long superseded by the likes of Mega-lo-mania, Utopia and, of course, Populous 2. Chances are you've already got the game, but if you haven't there's no harm in adding it to your software collection - it wouldn't be complete without it!

But it's the final game in the compilation, Hunter, that makes it an essential purchase. In a lot of ways Hunter's like Midwinter - travel around a 3D-polygon world, carrying out covert missions behind enemy line on foot and in a range of exotic vehicles - but the twist here is that instead of viewing the action in first-person, you 'observe' it all from a sort of floating camera looking down. In the space here it's not really possible to go into details but take my word for it that Hunter is a true classic. It was unfortunately originally released around the time of Activision's demise and so got a little neglected in all the hoo-haa but, whatever you do, don't miss out on it now. [DU]

OVERALL: 88%
(mainly because of Hunter)







FANTASTIC WORLDS

Ubi Soft £35.99

First up in this bumper compilation is Mega-lo-mania, Sensible Software's unusual God Game. Utilising superb graphics, an absorbing game, digitised speech (provided by real actors) and a simple player interface, this is one game that should be owned by everyone. Pirates is an old Microprose game which crosses old-fashioned exploring with arcadey fight sequences. It's definitely showing it's age now but no other game has come closer to recreating the salty sea-dog era so it's well worth a look.

Populous is the game which started the God sim craze and still bears up fairly well for it's age. It's far more involved than Mega-lo-mania and it has been superseded by Populous 2, but it's still a fine game. Realms is, perhaps, the weakest of the compilation. It's a strategy game that places you in control of a king in an effort to wipe out the opposing armies. It would make a fair budget purchase but is somewhat overshadowed by Mega Lo Mania and Populous.

Last up, then, is Wonderland, a text adventure with accompanying graphics. I know the words 'text adventure' strike fear into the heart of modern adventurers but Wonderland could hold its head up high when stood next to some of the turgid releases that periodically show their faces, and there are some superb character renditions.

At the end of the day, Fantastic Worlds is a superb compilation for those of you who want to do more than kill a few aliens and I heartily recommend it to anyone who fancies a little bit more than midless arcade blasting. [SB]

OVERALL: 86%

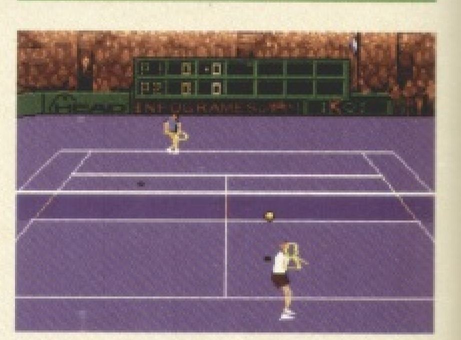


SPORTS MASTERS

Empire £29.99

The first game you're likely to encounter if you purchase Empire's latest compilation is the rather smelly European Championship 1992 (nineteen-ninety-pooh, more like!). Now this really is a terrible game with uncontrollable players, stupid computer controlled players, some of the most awful graphics ever seen in a football game, jerky scrolling, crappy sound... Need I continue?





Things improve in the quality department with the arrival of PGA Tour Golf. This is, in my opinion at least, the best golf game on the Amiga. It might not look as pretty as Nick Faldo's Championship Golf or as comprehensive as Microprose but in terms of immediate playability PGA is a real winner.

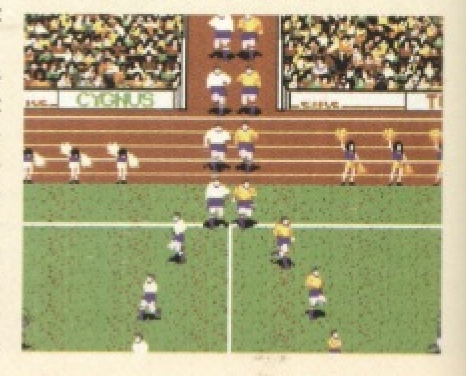


Almost on 'par' with PGA is Indianapolis 500, a game which was, until the arrival of F1GP, the best polygon racing game around. Although you only ever race around one oval track with left hand bends, the sheer speed and the sense of exhilaration more than make up for the lack of tracks. If you imagine Vrooom with a bit more authenticity in the car handling then that about sums it up.

Lastly, then, we stumble across Advantage Tennis. Hmmm, I'm not too sure about this one. It's certainly innovative, that's for sure. The action is viewed from a swinging camera which accommodates the action on-screen and the players are represented by polygons which make for an odd combination. The control of the players, however, doesn't feel too immediate and there are times during the game when you wonder what's going on.

Sports Masters consists of two groovy games, one okay and one abysmal so it's only worth purchasing if you don't have either Indy 500 or PGA. [SB]

OVERALL: 72%





At last the definitive guide to PC games written by PC enthusiasts for PC gamers.

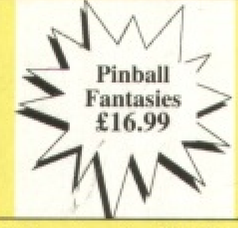
Written by Robin Matthews and Paul Rigby.

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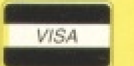




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SOCCER SUPREMO

AN INTERNATIONAL MANAGEMENT GAME

In the traditional number-juggling soccer management game wing-backs, sweepers, formations, styles, tactics are, at best, cosmetic, at worst, meaningless. The unique match simulation at the heart of Soccer Supremo restores all these and more, allowing genuine control over team performance, In addition to the visual feedback on your team, this match allows substitions, tactical positional changes and workrate instructionsto individual players which then influence the flow of the match. The increased realism and control transforms the supreme, but childish, gameplay of the traditional game into a compulsive simulation..

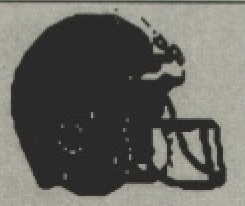
Yet another England manager has learnt the hard way that controlling an international squad is a very different ballgame to club management.
Every match is a cup-tie and every team -selection and result is picked apart by a voracious press. The pressure to succeed is incredible.
Soccer Supremo puts you in charge of a European national squad preparing for the European Nations Cup qualifiers. You have an initial four year contract that may be extended to six or eight years, or reduced to two, as the results dictate. You'll be expected to qualify for the Finals, then put up a show against the best European teams. but this is just preparation for the big one:The World Cup!
Customisation. The game will allow you to take the European nation of your choice and you will be allocated an initial squad of 16 players. You can introduce a further 34 players, making 50 in all, whose names and skills (but not levels) You can define yourself. These players are introduced gradually as you discover the weaknesses in your squad and also to create the balance of skills that match your style of play. The original 16 players can be defined in the same way using the EDIT program (free with the game) if you wish as well as the teams that will make up the opposition.

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IN MATCH TACTICAL MOVES

SUBSTITUTIONS
POSITIONAL CHANGES
OVERALL WORKRATE
IND. PLAYER WORKRATE



HEAD COACH V3

"From my point of view , the game has kept me sitting up at nights through holidays and weekends for up to 12 hours at a stretch, with miniscule breaks for food and other necessities...........It is a game I have no hesistation in recommending to anyone with even the slightest interest in American Football"(ATARI USER)

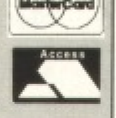
Headcoach V3 has been described as "the best game ever put onto a computer". It is the complete American Football game, a multi season epic with the very best strategic elements of the real thing. You will call the plays, devise the gameplans and develop the team.
Use the first season (2 pre-season games, 16 regular season games, and the play-offs) to discover your 45 man squad of players. Then exploit the college draft to improve the team and expand your game play to beat the very best the NFL can throw at you.
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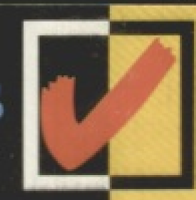
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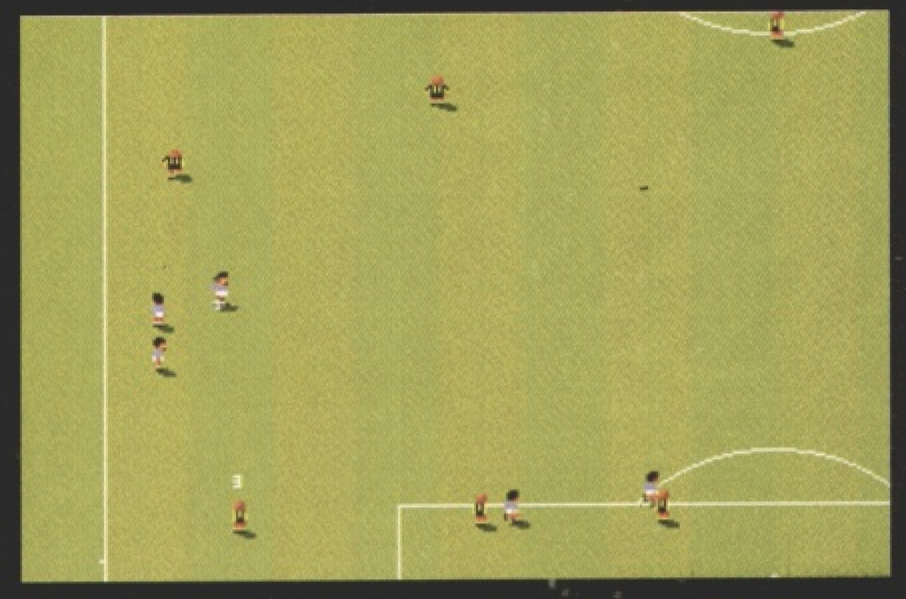




We have such wonders to show you in this month's Kill Zone. There's a fighter-by-fighter guide to Street Fighter 2. Then there are mission briefings for Fireforce and Sabre Team, and Malcolm trembles as our Legend of Kyrandia solution marches on. And to round it all off there's a whole flock of Snip Tips and, of course, the Games Surgery. But we 'kick off' (ho-ho) with this...

Sensible Soccer 1992/93 Season

Just when you thought you'd got Sensisoccer sussed, along comes a new version with better keepers, harder computer opponents and referees with itchy trigger fingers. So it's a good thing you've got Sensible's Jon Hare to guide you through all the new subtle nuances...



• Try tapping the ball to the player beside you in free kicks outside the penalty box. The opposition's defenders in the wall will lock up for a second, allowing you to spank the ball into the corner of the net with an aftertouch shot.

• If the opposition have had a defender sent off, the gap he leaves in the wall on free kicks is a useful place to slot the ball through into the goal.

• Despite the keepers' new, improved abilities, it is still possible to score easy goals. Simply run up the middle of the park in a straight line, vertically level with one of the goalposts. Then bash the ball straight (no aftertouch) just outside the area, and it should scrape just in past the woodwork. The keepers rarely save these shots.

• A good alternative corner strategy is to play the short ball to a waiting player outside the danger area, and then bending it towards goal from there. The ball comes in from a wider angle and so allows for more incoming header attempts.

• On receiving a pass in midfield, stay there and sit on the ball for a while. An opposition defender will invariably run out of position to intercept you - at this point, pass the ball up towards the goal. This catches the defender unawares and leaves your forwards unmarked for a shot at goal.

• Long diagonal shots into the far corner of the net will still work against the new supergoalies, but don't try to use aftertouch as they have now sussed this technique.

• For nice goals against weak teams, choose the Attack formation and pass the ball about just outside your opponent's penalty area. Your two forwards will push right up in front of the goal, bringing plenty of scoring chances.

• It is nearly impossible to chip the new improved goalies. Always try to place the ball wide of him or sneak it round him.

• If you have a man sent off in central defence, call up the bench and change to a more defensive formation to make up for the deficiency. Change from 3-5-2 to 4-4-2, from 4-4-2 to 5-3-2 and from 5-4-1 to Defend. Then call up the bench again and replace the first midfielder on the roster (the most defensive midfielder) with your substitute defender. This will prevent you from having a man out of position.

• Always change to Attack formation if you are losing with less than 30 minutes to go.

• Sometimes, when defending, it is a good policy to track the player with the ball and cover the goal rather than committing yourself to tackling the attacker

• If you want a real challenge, try playing one of the top-rank computer teams with every single player on your side out of position. Put a forward in goal, defenders in midfield etc and leave all your star players on the bench. Play in Attack formation for extra toughness. Good luck!

• Play a match between the England and West Germany custom teams for a game in special black-and-white 1966-o-vision. Isn't that clever? (Thanks very much to Mr Whitta for that spanking little extra feature).

• And finally - what three things have your Sensisoccer 92/93 disks and Kellog's Pop Tarts got in common? Answer:

(1) You put them in your toaster, they pop up hot.

(2) They are packaged in an attractive cardboard box.

(3) They taste bloody horrible.

STREET



It's the game that's taken the nation by storm, and so here with a character-by-character guide on how to beat the battlers is US Gold's Tony Bickley, a keen Street Fighter 2 fan himself. Take it away, Tone...





RYU/KEN

SPECIAL ATTACKS

These boys are pretty much identical apart from the colour of pyjamas they wear. They have three special attacks to pick from; a Fireball, the Hurricane Spinning Kick and the awesome Dragon Punch.

CHUN-LI
Easy. Fireball from a distance, else jab and kick as quick as you can. If she tries the Spinning Bird Kick crouch down and time your jab to send her reeling.

DHALSIM
Counter his Fireballs with your own and get in close to negate his long-reach advantage.

GUILE
Counter his Sonic Booms with Fireballs and whittle his energy down with low fast kicks.

E. HONDA
Honda will try to slap you into submission with his long-range arm attacks and get in close for a deadly hug, so keep your distance and use Fireballs and low crouching kicks.

BLANKA
If the hairy horror tries to electrify you use a Fireball or two to shake him out of it. Otherwise stay low and use your fast foot jabs to take him out.

ZANGIEF
Zangief is slow and bulky, but if he gets to grips with you he's deadly. Try to stay out of range of his bear hug and use Fireballs and low kicks to take him out.



CHUN-LI

SPECIAL ATTACKS

Chin-Li has two special attacks, the Spinning Bird Kick and the Hundred-Foot Kick. The Bird Kick is devastating if it connects but it is easily defended against, so it's best used only as a surprise attack when up close or when the opponent is dazed and can't defend himself.

The Spinning Bird Kick can quickly drain even Zangief of all his energy but since Chun-Li can't move while she's doing it it leaves her vulnerable to projectile attacks and is therefore best used when she has trapped her opponent in the corner.

RYU/KEN
Both can jab or crouch their way out of a Spinning Bird Kick attack, so beware!

DHALSIM
A feeble hand-to-hander, so get in close, strike fast and don't stop! Watch out for his Yoga Nuki (headbutt) but don't let him get too far away from you.

GUILE
Guile's Sonic Boom can be a real pain so stay calm and be ready to jump out of trouble.

E. HONDA
Honda's slowness makes him an easy target for Chun-Li's high bouncing attacks, so jump high and attack as soon as you land, immediately jumping again to get out of any trouble. However, beware Honda's far-reaching slaps!

BLANKA
Fast and dangerous, Blanka has a long reach and can turn on his electric forcefield long before an aerial attack connects, so stay low and kick hard. The double crouch kicks work best.

ZANGIEF
This beefcake can make mincemeat out of a girl, so stay low to avoid his Spinning Clothesline Punch.



DHALSIM

SPECIAL ATTACKS

Has two; the Yoga Fireball and the Yoga Flame. The Fireball is handy for getting at opponents on the other side of the arena, whereas the Flame is brilliant when the enemy is in close.

RYU/KEN
Counter their Fireballs with your own and use the long punch to keep them at bay.

CHUN-LI
Not an easy opponent to beat! Chunners has a nasty habit of jumping over your fireballs, so try a double slidekick followed by a head punch to take her out.

GUILE
Do a lot of blocking, as Guile tends to use his Sonic Boom a lot. Use the long low punch as often as possible and beware Guile's flash kicks!

E. HONDA
Use the Fireball to keep him at a distance then double slidekick him into a

FIGHTER 2

corner and finish him off with the Flame.

BLANKA
Keep away, and hurl a Fireball whenever he tries an Electric Field. If he starts a roll, time a round kick to block it. If you don't have time to do that, just block.

ZANGIEF
If Zangief tries a Spinning Clothesline Punch, counter with a souble slidekick. If he tries a jump kick, counter with either a round kick or jump and perform a stretch kick.



GUILE

SPECIAL ATTACKS

Guile has two specials; the Sonic Boom and the Back-Kick Flip. The Boom is quick and easy to pull off but can be predicable and thus easily avoided. In action Guile is very similar to Ryu and Ken, so follow their opponent-by-opponent guides.



E. HONDA

SPECIAL ATTACKS

Honda has two specials, the Flying Head-Butt and the Hundred-Hand Slap. In action they're very similar to Chun-Li's Spinning Bird Kick and Hundred-Foot Kick respectively, so the advice given for her attacks applies the same here.

RYU/KEN
Be patient. Block their attacks until you see an opening then strike hard and fast. When they're dazed, charge in to grab and crush them. If they're cornered, use the Hundred-Hand Slap to finish them off.

CHUN-LI
Avoid being caught napping on the ground - if she tries an aerial assault meet her halfway. She's a frail little thing - two chops and she's ready for the 'Big Cuddle'!

DHALSIM
Avoid the stretchy one's long reach and wear him down slowly until you can get in close enough to administer a death-dealing hug.

GUILE
Get in close and follow the same advice given above for dealing with Ryu and Ken.

BLANKA
Although Blanka has a long reach, Honda's is even longer so use that advantage to stay out of trouble.

ZANGIEF
Big, bad and very strong, the best way to deal with this Russian Rotter is to stay low and try to down him with leg sweeps.



BLANKA

SPECIAL ATTACKS

Blanka has two specials; his Electric Field and the Thunder Roll. The Electric Field is particularly useful if primed in the air - once he lands it will switch on immediately. The Thunder Roll has the same pros and cons as Chun-Li's Spinning Bird Kick and Honda's Flying Head-Butt.

RYU/KEN
Use Blanka's greater size and strength to your advantage. Try to trap them in a corner and electrocute them to extinction.

CHUN-LI
Wait until she's airborne then lauch into an aerial attack, priming the Electric Field so that when you land you can immediately finish her off.

DHALSIM
Use the roll to get in close but be wary of a well-timed counter punch. Try to trap and fry him if possible.

GUILE
Stay on the defensive and counter Guile's attacks with Blanka's longer reach. If Guile uses the Sonic Boom block it and reduce the distance between the two until within attacking range.

E. HONDA
Stay low and take the fat boy out with a cobination of the flip kick followed by the crouching turning kick.

ZANGIEF
Follow the same rules as for Honda - stay low and hit hard.



ZANGIEF

SPECIAL ATTACKS

The big Russian only has two specials, the Spinning Clothesline Punch and the Spinning Piledriver. The Punch is



easy to achieve but just as easy to avoid but it does heavy damage if it hits home. The Piledriver is more difficult to set up but near impossible to avoid and is devastating when it connects.

RYU/KEN
Both are far faster than Zangief and are likely to use the Fireball to keep you at a distance. Use the jumping kick to keep them on the defensive.

CHUN-LI
Because of her speed and agility this is one very dangerous lady. Use your strength to daze her then finish her off with the Spinning Clothesline Punch.

DHALSIM
This Yoga master will use his long reach to keep you at bay and then breath fire at you, so take care.

GUILE
Follow the same guides as for Ryu and Ken, but take note that his Sonic Booms move much faster than the pyjama boys' Fireballs.

E. HONDA
Don't let him get close enough to use the Hundred-Hand Slap on you, and watch out for his Head-Butt.

BLANKA
Same rules apply as for Honda, but watch out for the Electric Field if you try a jumping attack.



FIREFORCE

Will you all please SHUT UP!? We're sick to the back teeth of endless phonecalls begging us for tips on ICE's excellent stalk-n'-slash combat game. So read these expert tips and save your phone bill, alright?

GENERAL TIPS

USING THE KNIFE

Your knife is a very powerful weapon when used correctly and is essential when on a stealth mission. As soon as you see an enemy, hit the floor and wait for them to come to you. If they don't, crawl (don't walk) towards them. When you are in striking distance, stand up and use your knife to stab them or, if you're a professional, slit their throat.

USING FIREARMS

When using a gun, always lay down and fire as most of the enemy guards are unable to hit you on the ground. Shoot them as soon as you see them - if you know when they appear, it's possible to shoot them before they even come on screen. This is especially important when killing the members of the elite enemy forces, identifiable by their red berets.

If you know that there is an enemy soldier coming up that is not in your current firing range, prepare your gun before you get to them so you are able to quickly shoot up or down at them. This avoids having to aim while you are being shot at from all angles.

USING M26 GRENADES

These are essential when destroying land mines placed by the enemy and can be directed to go in a specific direction by moving the cross-hair around the character and releasing fire to throw the grenade.

MISSION BREAKDOWNS



MISSION ONE

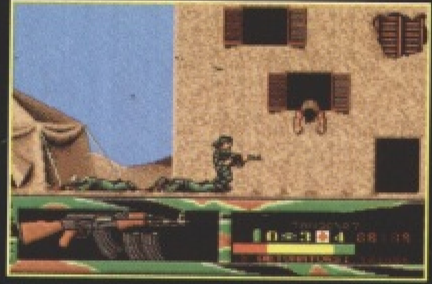
Take the following equipment:

- AKM Rifle
- 9 X AK47 Mags
- 5 X M26 Grenades
- 3 X Field Dressing Packs

Select the gun as soon as you start the mission. Drop onto the floor under the truck and kill the enemy that approaches as soon as he comes onto the screen.

The leader of the enemy forces (the one with the beige beret) can be found at one of the following locations: either down from TANGO 8, up from TANGO 21, up from TANGO 36 or up and left from TANGO 37. Once you have found him, kill him and the accompanying guard and leave the building.

When at TANGO 28/29 you will need to use a M26 grenade to kill a soldier and destroy some land mines. Now advance to your pickup point at TANGO 41.



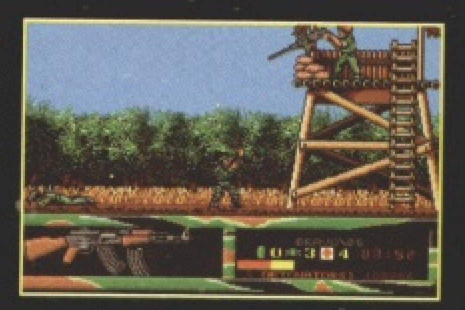
MISSION TWO

Take the following equipment:

- AKM Rifle
- 4 X AK47 Mags
- 2 X M26 Grenades
- 2 X Field Dressing Packs
- 5 X C4 Explosives

As soon as you land at the drop-off point, switch to the gun and kill the enemy soldier with the red beret. Push on until you reach the first hut at BRAVO 7. Go inside to collect the first aid if you need it, then leave and destroy the hut with C4.

To destroy the next hut at BRAVO 10, you should first kill the two soldiers situated around the hut, kill the







enemy soldier at the top of the tower and then finally destroy the hut. You will need to use a couple of M26 grenades after destroying the next hut at BRAVO 14 and then progress to BRAVO 26 where you can blow the hut up for extra points. Now go to the pickup point at BRAVO 29 to complete the mission.

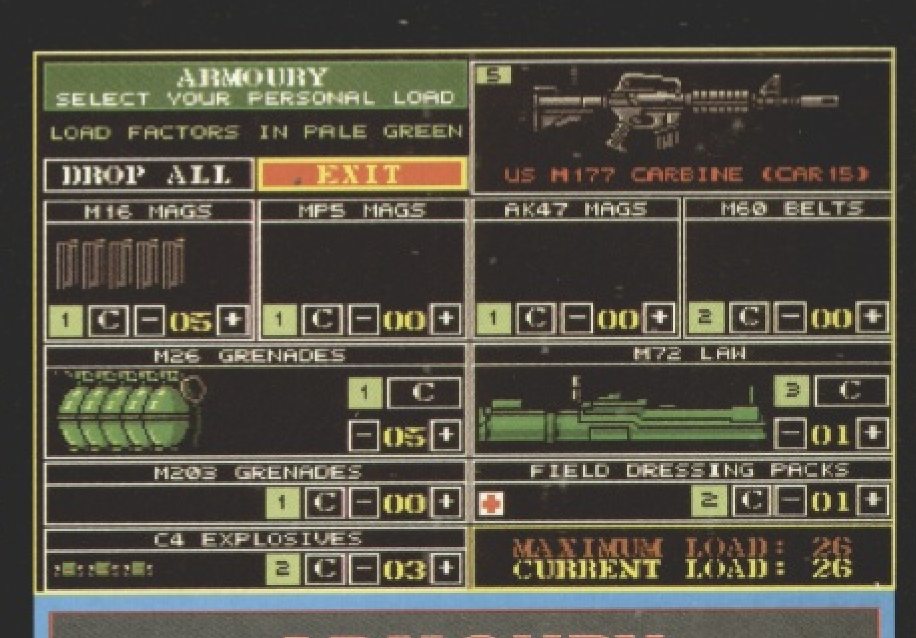
MISSION THREE

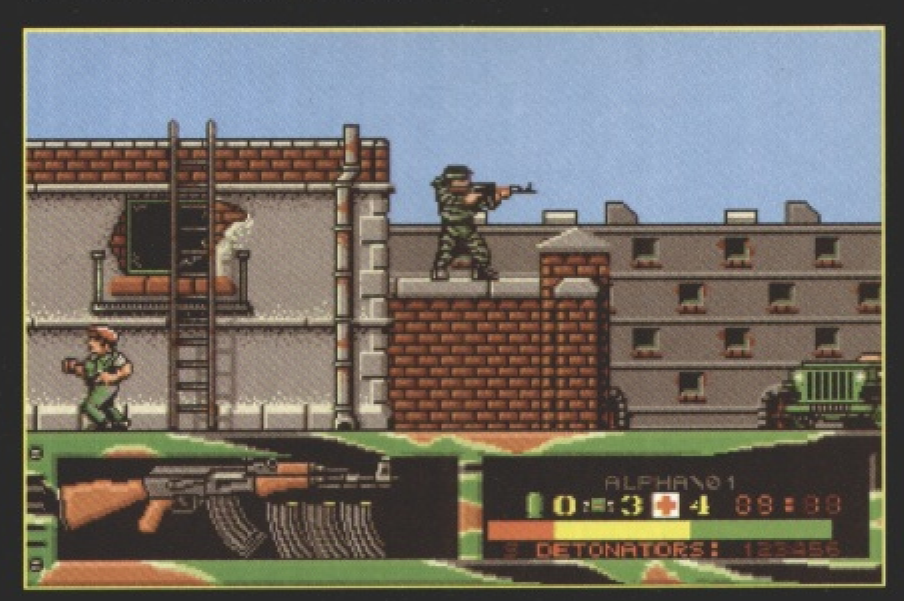
Take the following equipment:

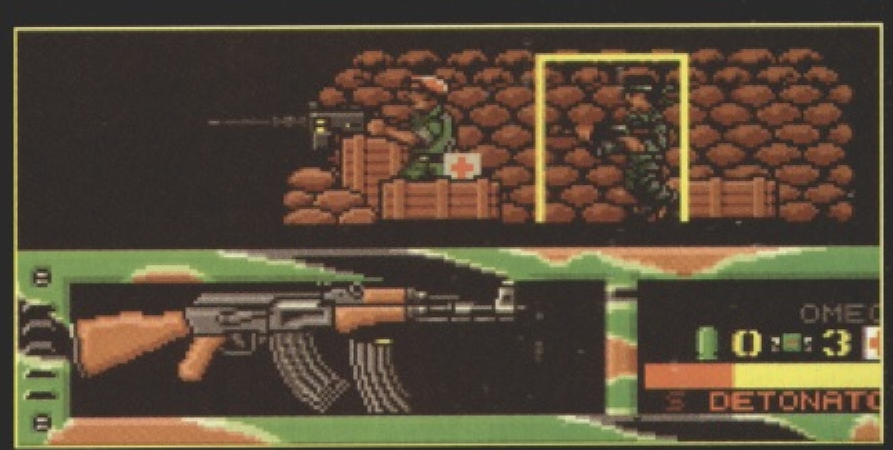
M177 CAR15 Rifle
5 X Mags
5 X C4 Explosives
2 X M26 Grenades
2 X Field Dressing Packs

On this mission, you really need to search all the buildings, and keep down the stairs and out the exit, making sure to crouch down when you come out as two soldiers are waiting here. Kill them and progress to the next exit, then go upstairs and destroy any SAMs you find. Find the exit from the building at ALPHA 27 but do not leave the building. Instead go right and shoot as soon as you enter the room.

Go up the stairs, shoot the enemy and then go right, where you may find a SAM to destroy. Go up, destroying any more missiles you see and then down to exit. Leave the building, kill the enemy and go up the ladder at ALPHA 28. Progress on to ALPHA 33 where you will be picked up.





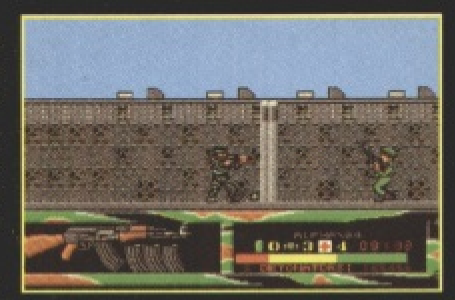


count of the number of SAM missiles you have destroyed - you must blow up five to complete the mission. A good way to do this is to lay the explosives but not detonate them as then you can see how many explosives you have laid by looking to see how many highlighted detonators there are.

Advance to ALPHA 7 and enter the building there. Kill the enemy soldier. Go upstairs, kill ther other enemy soldier, place an explosive by the SAM in this room if there's one here and then search both soldiers to see if they have any ammunition. Exit and proceed to ALPHA 13.

Go up the ladder and enter the door at the top. Follow the stairs down and then go down the stairs behind the crate in the next room. You should now be in a room with four crates stacked in the shape of an upside-down T. Behind these are more stairs. Go down these, which take you past the wall and carry on until you find the exit out of the building, placing another explosive next to any SAMs you see. Don't go out of the exit, but instead go up the stairs where you may find another SAM.

Once this is destroyed, go back



MISSION FOUR

Take the following equipment:

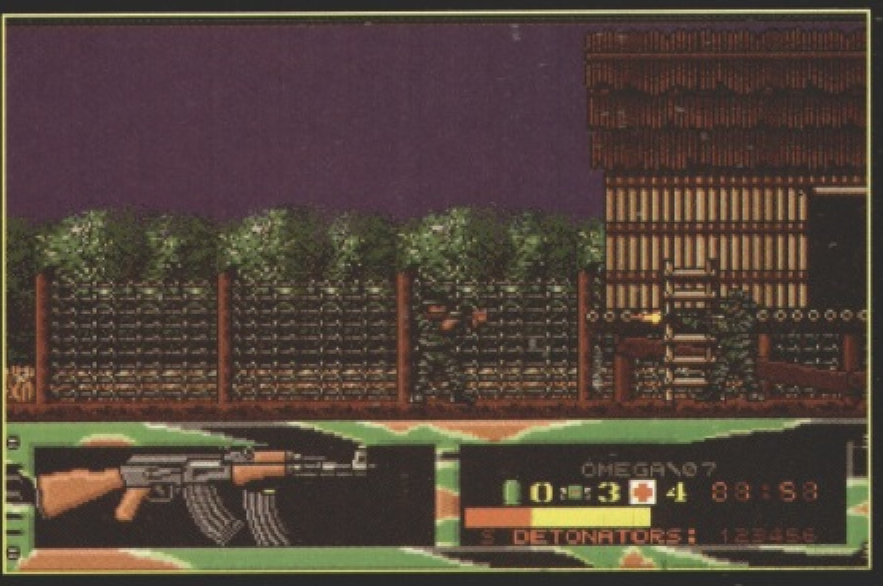
MP5 Sub-Machine Gun
2 X Cartridges
6 X C4 Explosives
4 X Field Dressing Packs

You will be dropped at map reference point OMEGA 0. As this is a stealth mission it is important that little noise is made, so use your knife at all times.

Wait until you see a log at OMEGA 1 and then hit the floor and start to crawl. This will stop the enemy gun from firing at you which is very important as this is, remember, a stealth mission. Crawl until you get past the gun bunker and then go into the bunker and kill the enemy inside.

Now move on to OMEGA 9 where you will find the first hut that contains a hostage. Kill the enemy guards outside the hut with your knife and then go into the hut. Kill the guard inside and free the hostage by cutting his bondsd with your knife. Before you leave the hut, drop a C4 plastic explosive pack in the hut so you can create a diversion when all of the hostages have been rescued.

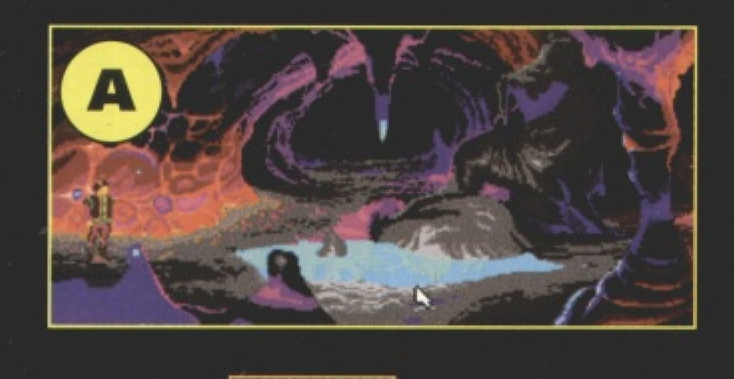
Repeat this procedure for each of the hostages in the huts at OMEGA locations 12, 15, 18, 20, 23 and 24 and then progress to the pre-determined pickup point, detonating the explosives to create that diversion along the way. Mission accomplished!



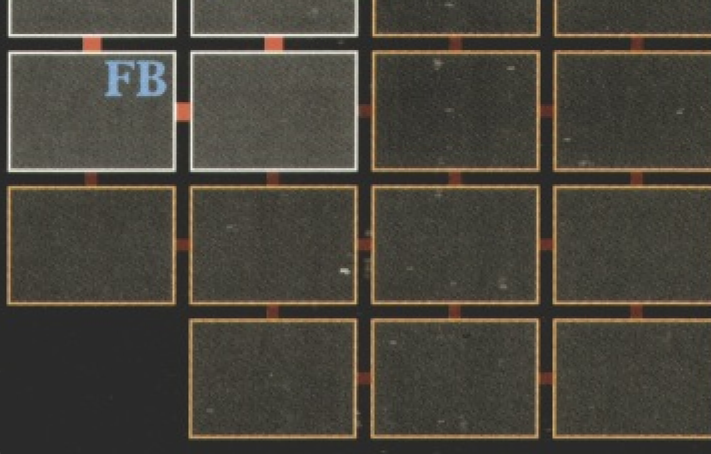
HOSTAGE NOTE:

After successful hostage rescue operations, men on the front end mission roster that were previously listed as Missing In Action may now be active and available for duty if they were one of the captive hostages.

THE LEGEND







Phew! Last month Brandon mended the bridge, completed the Birthstones Quest and encountered the thoroughly-evil Malcolm for the first time. All that was a walk in the park compared to what our hero has to face in part two of our complete solution - wait 'till you see what's in store this month!

CHAPTER 3





SHADOWREALM

You may remember that in the previous instalment we left Brandon waiting patiently outside the entrance to Shadowrealm. This is a huge sprawling labyrinth that requires a good deal of skill and cunning to negotiate. The first thing you'll notice is that the majority of rooms are in complete darkness and if you enter any such locations then the mysterious Shadow Wraiths will devour you instantly.

What Brandon needs to do is pick Fireberries from the many bushes that litter Shadowrealm. The only problem with these light-emitting plants is that they can only be carried for three screens before they lose all their glow so following the right route through the maze is essential. In the handy map that you should find elsewhere on the page you'll notice that we've indicated the positions of the Fireberries (with the initials 'FB') and the route you need to follow is coloured red - we're bloody great, aren't we?

The first thing you need to do is enter the labyrinth via - surprisingly - the entrance. When Brandon crosses under the iron gate it will close behind him preventing an immediate exit. Oh dear! The only thing that can reopen the offending restraint is to chuck some rocks into the counter balance. Five rocks are required to start the mechanism and their positions are indicated with an 'R' on the map.



Follow the route indicated by the red lines and pick up all five of the heavy stones. When you pass a Fireberry Bush, pick up three berries and deposit one each in the caverns between the next bush. If the Fireberries are left in a cave then they will continue to glow for an infinite amount of time, meaning that you can travel back to the counterbalance safe in the knowledge that the caverns will be illuminated already.

OF KYRANDIA



NOTABLE SCENES
- **A** The Mineral Pool
- **B** The Iron Gate
- **C** The Chasm of Everfall
- **D** The Patheon of Moonlight
- **E** The Cavern of Twilight
- **F** The Emerald Cave
- **G** Volcanic River
- **FB** Location of Fireberry Bushes
- **R** Rock Locations

Once you've collected all the rocks, make your way back to the iron gate pausing only to pick up the coin from the Cavern of Twilight and an emerald from the Emerald Cave. Top tip: Even though, in theory, the path back should be free from Shadow Wraiths, it's a good idea to carry a glowing Fireberry all the time, just in case you take a wrong turn. Remember - if you've been doing your job correctly, every screen should have a Fireberry already in it and if, on your way back, you enter a location that doesn't then you've taken a wrong turning.

Once you arrive at the iron gate, throw the five rocks into the counterbalance and the gate should open. Travel back to the wishing well (once outside the labyrinth, go two screens left and then two screens up) and pop the coin into its depths. When the coin is safely in the well a moonstone will appear. Take the moonstone and journey back to the Patheon of Moonlight. Place the stone on the pedestal base and, as if by magic, some Will-O'-Wisps will appear and activate the purple Amulet gem.

If you click on the amulet you'll notice that Brandon transforms into a Will-O'-Wisp himself which is great for travelling about. Another handy byproduct of this is that the wisp emits its own light - removing the need to continually collect fireberries or travel by the set route. When in this state, Brandon should pop over to the the Volcanic River and use the scroll that Darm gave him. The river should freeze and Brandon will be able to cross over to the other side where a mysterious iron key should be collected.

Once in possession of this key, change back to the Will-O'-Wisp form, go to the Chasm of Everfall and float safely across - into Chapter 4.







TIPS

CHAPTER 4

FAERIEWOOD

The first thing you'll need to do is collect the apple which is on the screen you enter. If you walk three screens to the right you'll notice that a branch will fall from a tree and knock you out. Hardly a good start to the chapter, is it?

Brandon will wake up a few disk accesses later and find himself in Zanthia the Alchemist's abode. She'll pass the time of day with our hero and request that Brandon retrieves some magic water from the fountain so don't forget to pick up the flask before you leave her house. Malicious Malc, however, has other ideas and when the two meet by the fountain, Malcolm will destroy it and nick one of the crystal orbs, proclaiming that he's going to play hide and seek with Brandon. Obviously the first task, then, is to find the orb and stick it back on the fountain.

This is where we come in. Now, don't tell Malcy Malc that we told you, but he's hidden it behind the flaming tree so make your way over there and use Darm's scroll on it to extinguish the flames. Collect the orb and place it back on the fountain which should then be restored to its former glory. Fill the flask with water and drink some yourself - this will activate the blue amulet gem (which allows Brandon to dispel some small enchantments). Fill the flask up once more and nip back to Zanthia's.

Forceful Zanth, not content with ordering you about once, will request that you venture out into the wild blue yonder and find some Blueberries. The best (and, indeed, only) place to obtain some Blueberries is at the Sparkling Waterfall so travel there immediately. When you return to Zanthia's you'll notice that something's missing - Zanthia herself. Lift up the rug and exit via the disguised trap door.

Once back outside you're going to need to do a spot of scouting about as you need to find a blue, red and yellow gem and one yellow flower. If you're having problems finding the gems then try retracing your steps. You'll also need to collect a red orchid from the Tropical Lagoon. Once you've obtained all the necessary gems and flowers then leggit back to Zanthia's and begin to create a few nifty potions.

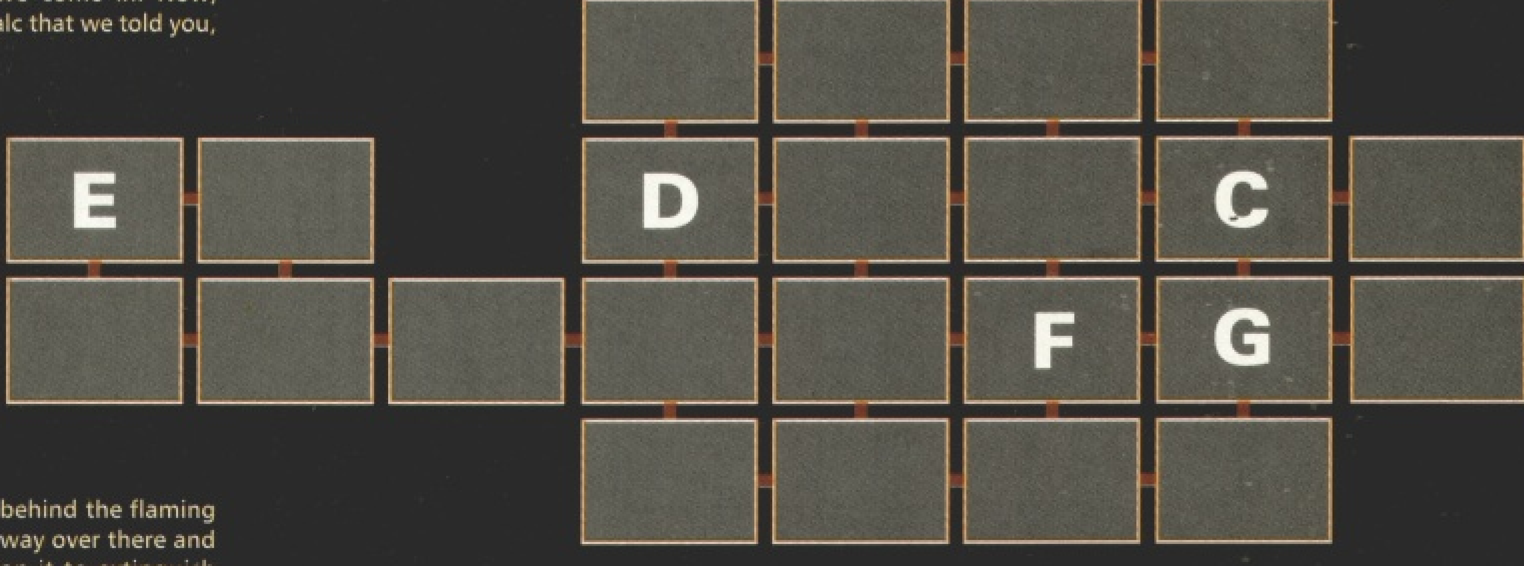
You need to place a blue gem and a blueberry into the cauldron and fill up a flask with the potion. Stick a yellow flower and a yellow gem into the cauldron and fill up a flask with the resulting yellow potion and, finally, place a red gem and a red orchid into the cauldron and fill up two flasks with the red potion. Once you've performed all that, journey over to Crystals of Alchemy and mix the blue and red potions to obtain a purple potion and mix the red and yellow potions to obtain an orange one.

Now it's time to go to the Royal Chalice where you can use the blue amulet to release it from its magic spell. Unfortunately, though, a fawn will appear and will snatch it for himself. Chase the fawn to his tiny home and drink the purple potion to shrink our hero until he's small enough to enter the house. Once inside, give the fawn the apple and the creature will swap it for the Chalice.

Right, you're almost ready to enter











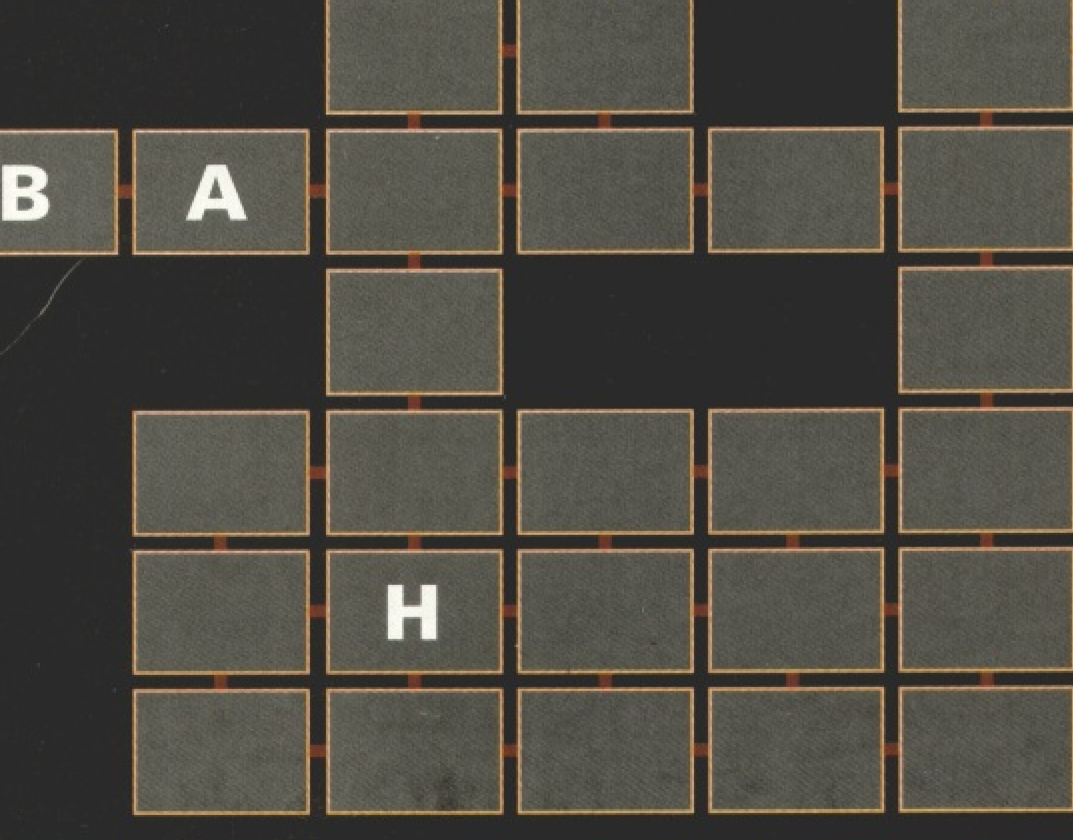
the castle and face Malcolm for the final confrontation but before you go make sure that you are carrying the key, the Royal Chalice and a flower - if you haven't got these then make sure you collect them before you proceed to the next paragraph.

O.K. Now it's time to go to the Tropical Lagoon and drink the orange potion. Once you've tasted this dubious-looking liquid you'll notice that Brandon, rather mysteriously, turns into a winged horse and flies off into the distance. With that note, then, I'll bid you farewell and see you all next month for the final confrontation.









NOTABLE SCENES

- A Zanthia's Laboratory
- B Outside Zanthia's
- C The Fountain of Magic
- D The Flaming Tree
- E The Sparkling Waterfall
- F The Royal Chalice
- G The Fawn's Home
- H The Crystals of Alchemy
- I The Tropical Lagoon





SABRE

By Jiminy, the latest strategic brain-scratcher from Krisalis is a toughy and no mistake! Well, now being in the SAS can be as easy as falling off a log thanks to our handy tips on how to complete the first level, courtesy of Phil Hackney...

At the start of the game you can select one of the three difficulty levels: on easy level the enemy can only see you every third move. It's this level that is best used for developing your tactics before taking on the more-realistic medium and hard levels.

EQUIPMENT

All soldiers should be given a bullet-proof vest and S10 respirator. Give CS gas grenades (no more than two) to Jones and McDonald. Give the medical kit to McDonald, but do not use the spare. This should safeguard you in case McDonald goes MIA. For guns use only one magazine for those which have a good capacity - any more (expect in the case of Calvert) is a waste if your man is killed. Stun grenades are the least effective weapons but can actually kill an enemy when used at close range.



JUNGLE TACTICS

When reinforcements are called in they come through the main gate. Therefore it is highly recommended that you leave a guard on these gates to deal with the incoming enemy. This acts as perfect protection for the troops who are rescuing hostages. You should find that McDonald is the best man for the job. Leave him with the medical kit as he'll be able to help a soldier in distress and being central to the camp he'll have quick access to all areas.

The first two hostages are situated in the hut at the bottom left corner of the camp. There are quite a few enemies patrolling this area so send in Jones - using his speed he can quickly get in the door and dispose of the main guard. Main guards, unlike the randomly-placed enemy troopers, are always in the same place. One such guard is always near the main gates at the start of this level.

The next hostage is situated in the hut directly in front of the main gates. This hostage is the easiest to rescue. For this job it is best to use Roderick as he is not quite as quick as Calvert.

The final hostage can be found in the hut to the far right of the camp. This is one of the trickiest rescues because of the windows and open space in this area. Use Calvert to get to the hostage and, when escorting him out (something you should always do), go around the trees. Do not take him back by walking near the fence - more often than not, reinforcements will be waiting to pick you off from outside the camp.

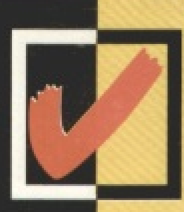
IN GENERAL

■ When operating your soldiers, always let them have about fifteen actions points when you end their turn and, if near a hut, leave your man with his back to the wall so he has the best view of the camp.

■ Should you get shot and survive, try to head for cover; behind a tree or round the corner of a hut for example. If possible try to get close



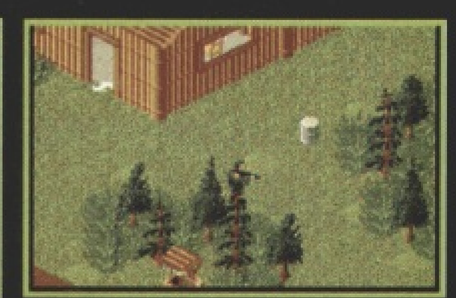


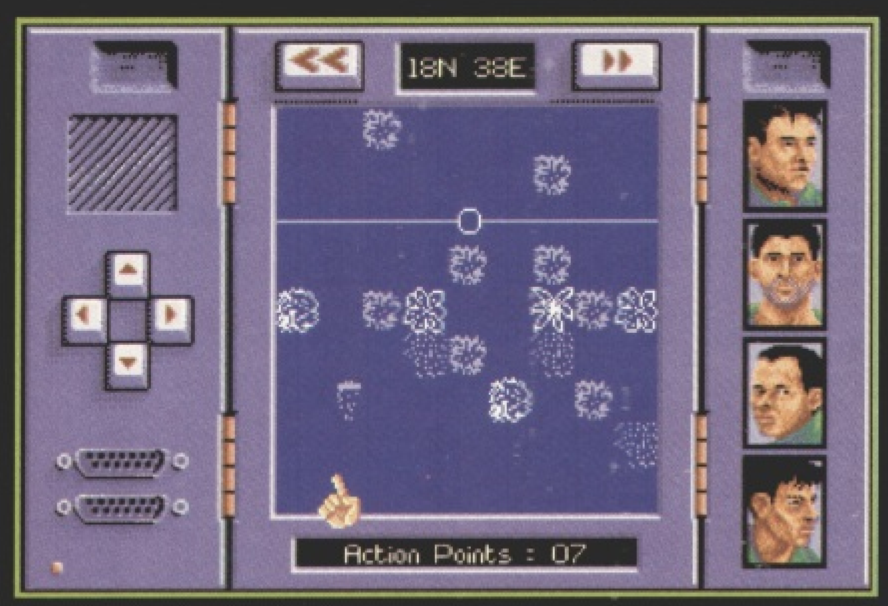


TEAM









to the soldier with the medical kit but, even if you receive treatment, keep well hidden until your action points have risen back to a decent level. If it is not possible to receive treatment, try dropping some of your equipment to enable you to walk further.

■ If one of your team dies, try to rescue the rarer equipment, such as the bullet-proof vest or S10 respirator. Failure to do so will result in the loss of that equipment for the rest of the game.

■ Occasionally you will find yourself surrounded by up to three enemies - this is the time to use CS gas. Also, throwing a grenade round the corner of a room can deal with any enemies creeping out of view (particularly when using Jones in the far left hut).

• More experienced players should find this first level easy to complete with just two soldiers, namely Jones and Calvert. Although it takes longer, it will save soldiers for later levels.

• Finally, there is a cheat mode that gives your soldiers unlimited action points. We won't tell you exactly what it is until next month, but in the meantime, here's what you do: Go to the blueprint screen and, imagining that the four portraits of the team members represent the numbers 1 to 4 from top to bottom, enter an 8-digit code. Simple, eh? All you have to do is figure out what it is...

SELECTING YOUR TEAM

An important factor to consider when choosing your team is how quickly they can move in and out of areas. Although marksmanship is also important, it can be improved by choosing a good weapon. Taking these two things into consideration, you should find the following soldiers the most useful:



W. Jones (Trooper)

Jones' most outstanding qualities are his speed and strength. He is superb when using grenades, being able to throw them further than anyone. But he is lacking in marksmanship, so equip him with an L7A2 rifle to raise his standard, and short on intelligence, often failing to detect enemy movement. His height means he won't be spotted as easily as, say, Sgt Armstrong.



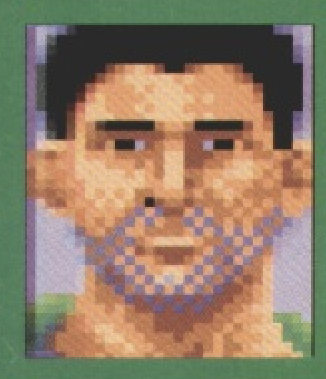
T. Roderick (Sergeant)

Roderick is the third fastest soldier in the group. His marksmanship is incredible so you should find the M16A2 an ideal weapon. Athough he possesses an average perception and poor strength, his other qualities more than make up for it. Do not, under any circumstances, expect him to accurately throw a grenade. This is particularly good advice when in the presence of a hostage!



C. Calvert (Trooper)

Calvert's qualities are his speed and perception. He is superb at hearing and spotting enemy movement and, because of his good marksmanship, can deal with most situations. He works well with a G3 - the lightest weapon for its range. Give him at least two magazines, as he often spots enemies at distance, hence he will have more encounters.

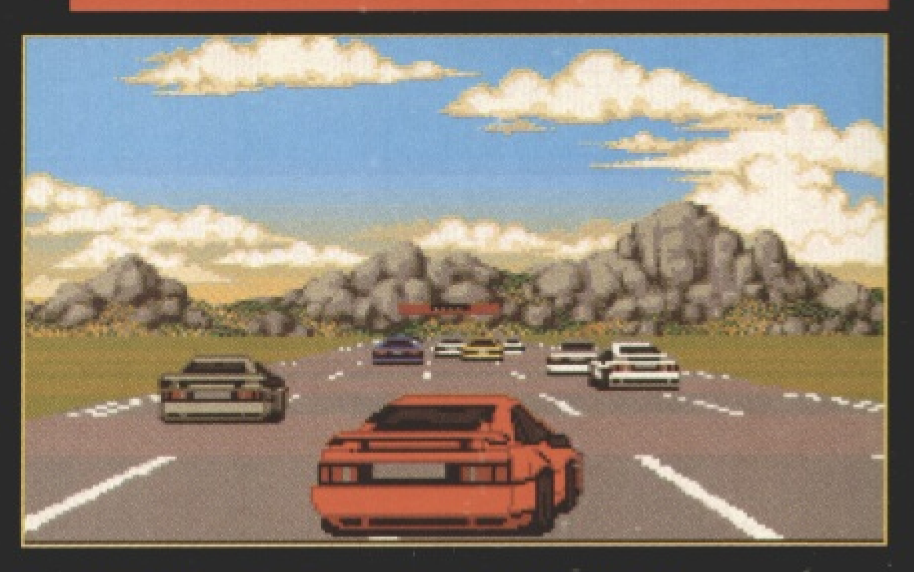


L. McDonald (L. Corp.)

McDonald is your basic Mr Average, neither brilliant nor abysmal but a healthy mid-way in-between. His speed is good and, assuming you arm him with an L7A2, his marksmanship is very good. This all-round ability makes McDonald a good addition to the group. His main weakness is his perception but even in this department he is second only to Calvert.

SNIP

Cor, I'll tell you what - after all the festive drinking and all that, I'm feeling extremely TIPSy! It's a good job, really, as these pages are commonly regarded by all of us here at The One as being the best tips pages in the business. If you've got any superb cheats or tips then jot them down and send to: Snip Tips, THE ONE, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU. There'll be some top software prizes for the best we receive or a highly valuable mention here in The One. You're a winner whatever!



ALIEN BREED '92
Team 17

There's a few weird things to be found in the Intex Systems that litter the levels in Team 17's extended remix 12" rave version of the highly successful Alien Breed and the man in the know is Cezanne Rafluzzman from London. Cheers Cezanne, a software prize will be winging its way in your direction shortly.

Anyway, find a computer and log onto it by tapping the space bar. You can then type one of these phrases (including spaces) for some strange messages or cheats.

THE ONE
CU AMIGA
CVG
AMIGA ACTION
AMIGA POWER
AMIGA FORMAT
AMIGA FORCE
SEGA
CHEAT
ANDREAS
PETER
BOBERG
STEFAN
MARTYN BROWN
JUNIOR MACMILLAN
DAVE BROADHURST
RICO HOLMES
ALLISTER BRIMBLE
HAYDN DALTON

LEMMINGS
Psygnosis

For all you newcomers to the phenomenon, here's how to access the cheatmode on the ORIGINAL game. Type FQUIGGLY on the title screen to obtain all sorts of nice treats.



SHADOW DANCER
US Gold

To say our 'phones haven't stopped ringing this month with people begging to know the cheat for this aging beat-'em-up would be a complete fabrication. You've all obviously been too busy trying to complete the game fairly and squarely to bother us so we thought it'd be nice to put you out of your misery. Pause the game and type GIVE ME INFINITES (including spaces) to gain infinite lives and magic.

LOTUS 3
Gremlin

Literally millions of people have sent in the codes for this top racing game so thanks to the lot of yers, especially Simon Stevens from Highcliffe and Denny Hilton who lives in Newcastle. Type in the following to be able to play the latter courses.

Easy Level
1 PWRWUWHNM-30
2 XMQIYSKAS-80
3 UVQSNPBCM-70
4 CWVBQPCAV-50
5 SFXUXXXXP-60
6 HSYWYSKGC-50
7 IVVEMMKOZ-50

Medium Lèvel
1 ANNSMQLPN-60
2 XMQIYSKAS-50
3 RTLMYJKHB-60
4 ERRURV——67
5 NSSSXXXXS-60
6 WSVUQPCSJ-70
7 OUNDEFACG-99
8 GXWDYPACV-68
9 BZ-ZF-BAT-90
10LWNJWKACN-90

Hard Level
1 IYVVNVEQR-35
2 KAZZNIKAI-45
3 FGQLJGDAF-65
4 MFFSRPYDU-60
5 PLQTZDPE-80
6 ZKZGKJKKK-50
7 TGGJGGTTT-63
8 AFZYBQCJT-70
9 JBOUKJHKA-99
10DASICOTET-80
11XDNVSEECE-85
12QDSCJVEBT-75
13SKGYXXXXK-57
14YKGJWVNAK-92
15WJMEGMEQH-60

ASSASSIN
Team 17

Cezanne also suggests that you enter one of the following into the high score table.

ASSASSIN
THE ONE AND ONLY
SUPERFROG
ALIEN BREED
PROJECT X
PSIONIC SYSTEMS

Hmmm, it seems to me as if Team 17 want to plug all their games in these pages.



TIPS



TRODDLERS
Storm

So, then, here we go again! Actually, due to Simon being a completely crap typist, he - how shall we put it? - 'messed up' the code for level 51 in the last issue, the fool! So, before this month's listing, you'll find the correction below...

51 UPSIDEOUT
61 SACRIFICE
62 BOOMPARADE
63 WAITFORIT
64 ROCKBLAST
65 NOWASTEALL
66 FROMABOVE
67 SMASHHITS
68 CRUSHRUCH
69 FIRSTFIRE
70 BURNOUT
71 RUMBLEHOT
72 COCKTAIL
73 BUGGINHARD
74 MOREFUN
75 SPINAROUND
76 LETITOUT
77 ALLABOUT
78 BOUNCEIT
79 RAINDROPS
80 FIREANDICE
81 SLOWBURN
82 STALLEM
83 BADBOMBS
84 SOLOMAN
85 HELLSDITCH
86 FIRSTFIRST
87 GOODLUCK
88 TIMEHUNTER
89 NODELAY
90 NOPLUGPULL



POPULOUS 2
Bullfrog

This game might be getting on a bit but there's still no denying it's a classic. So we thought you might appreciate this small tip sent in to us from Brian McCarthy from Kinsdale in Ireland. To possess a God with maximum attributes in every respect, simply type in the following code in the usual place:

ADKITAKDVGZLRGWZ

F-15 STRIKE EAGLE 2
Microprose

If you've rushed out and bought the Combat Classics compilation then you'll no doubt be spending a lot of time in the skies with this excellent flight simulation. If that's the case then you may be interested to know that if you press Ctrl, R and Alt simultaneously then your ammuntion supply will be instantly replenished. Tom Cruise never had it that easy in Top Gun, did he?

THE HUMANS
Mirage

Last month we generously printed the codes for the first twenty-five levels of Mirage's puzzler and this month we're going to print a few more...

26 PARKVIEW
27 NICENEASY
28 GREEN CARD
29 COOKIE
30 MALCY MALC
31 RAVING BURK
32 YOU GOT IT
33 SGNIMMEL
34 MINISTRY
35 MAD FREDDY
36 BIZARRE
37 FREE SCOTLAND
38 APPLE JUICE
39 PAYDAY
40 BANANNA MOON
41 BONUS
42 BOUNCING
43 NO MONEY
44 A S F
45 VISION
46 SISTERS
47 FAST FASHION
48 CARGO
49 RAB C NESBITT
50 RANGERS





READYSOFT SNIP TIPS SPECIAL!!!

What with the release of Dragons Lair 3 (reviewed this issue), we decided that there's bound to be a resurgence of interest in these so-called 'interactive cartoons'. To save the embarrassment of actually buying these game-less classics, why not pop into a shop where they've got the game running and type the following to see all the games complete themselves?

DRAGON'S LAIR
On the title screen, press the following keys together ESC, R, /, N, and 7.

DRAGON'S LAIR 2
Type 'GET MORDROC DIRK' (with spaces) on the title screen.

SPACE ACE
Pause the game on the first screen and type 'DODEMODEXTER'.

GUY SPY
When the title screen appears, type 'GETVONMAX' , press ENTER and then F1.

GAMES SURGERY

DOCTOR DAVID WRITES: My word, you were a sick lot over the festive season, weren't you? On my return to the Surgery after the Christmas hols I was amazed to discover a huge sack of mail, bursting at the seams with letters begging for help. On emptying the sack, I was even more amazed to discover a dead postman, who had obviously been crushed by the huge weight of post he was carrying. Still, at least his grieving relatives can take some consolation in the thought that if it hadn't been for him, these poor wretches would never have been saved...

Dear Doc,
I have recently bought INDIANA JONES AND THE LAST CRUSADE. I am under Venice but I can't find a way to get to the tomb or use the plug. What do I need to do?
Jamie Whitehouse, Milnrow, Rochdale.

Ah yes! I suspected that Jonesius Last Crusadus would be coming back to plague us again after its recent budget re-release! Pulling the plug is essential if you're to progress. Earlier on in the catacombs you should have found a skeleton's arm with a hook attached to it. Use this hook with the plug, then use the whip with the hook. Water will gush out of the gaping hole. If you now walk up to the first level you should find that a room that was flooded isn't any longer, and you can progress into the chambers beyond. But there's still a way to before you find the tomb...!

Dear Doctor,
I have had RICK DANGEROUS for two years now and I still can't get past the first mission. Do you have any suggestions or cheats to help please?
Robert Power, Southminster, Essex.

Although I despise begging I will help you. Simply press the 'T' key when the game has loaded, and when asked whether you want infinite lives reply 'YES' and then press 'O'.

Dear Doc,
In MONKEY ISLAND 2 where in the world is the bottle of whisky I need to get rid of the salt in the ocean water on Dinky Island? If you tell me I'll give you some.
Alex Amodeo, Cardiff, Wales.

How could I refuse an offer like that? You'll find the bottle on the seashore near the still - it's a littler hard to see but run the mouse pointer along the edge of the beach where the sea meets the land and you should come across it sooner or later. The bottle is actually used to get the cracker mix from the bag in the jungle... If you need any more help why not take a look at October's issue where we printed the full solution?

Dear Doc,
I am writing to you in desperation. I have tried everything I can think of but I still can't get past Scene 14 of DRAGON'S LAIR 2: TIMEWARP. Please help me!
Paul Jackman, London.

If you're that desperate to see what happens later on again, you could always try the cheat printed in this month's Snip Tips. However, to get you out of your current predicament, here's what you have to do: By Scene 14 I presume you mean the bit where you've just got into the driving seat of the time machine again after the set-to with the snake. So, hit FIRE to fend off the reptile's attack, then push RIGHT to put the sword into the time machine's control slot and then hit FIRE again to whizz on through time. Simple when you know how, eh?

Dear Doctor,
I recently bought FUTURE WARS on budget and after weeks of trying I still can't get beyond my boss's office. I've picked up everything I can find and tried everthing on everything else but i just can't get any further. Can you please help me?
Paul Rowan, Huntington, York.

Ah yes, this is a bit of a thorny one, mainly due to the miniscule size of the graphics. If you examine the map on the office wall and then rove the mouse pointer over the enlarged picture of it, you should eventually find a little hole (try out any darkish blobs on the map). If you now put the flag in the hole something very interesting should happen...

Dear Doc,
Aaargh! FUTURE WARS! I've just been teleported to the future and I can't kill the monster attacking the woman and child. I've got the key, the lance and the documents, but none of these help. Have I missed something? There's a tap on one of the screens - am I supposed to use it to fill something up? Please help me!
Colin Starr, Tonbridge.

Yes, you have missed something. In fact, you've missed two somethings. On the screen that you first teleport to examine the mounds of rubble in the bottom-right hand corner of the screen - you should eventually find a blowtorch. On the next screen (the one with the manhole cover in it) you should find a box of fuses in a mound of rubble near the centre of the screen. (See the the little white dot? That's the mound to search.) Now go down the sewers, use the blowpipe with the tap to fill it with gas, then use the blowtorch on the monster. If you're told that doesn't work, edge a little closer to the beast and try again. Does that help you? Sorry? What are the fuses for? My lad, I can't help you with everything...

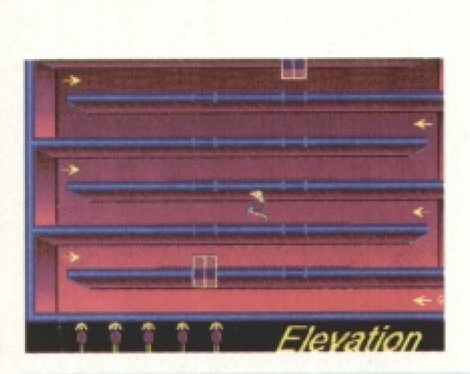
Dear Doc,
Please could you tell me if you have a tip or a cheat for ROBOCOP 2? I find this game really hard and can't get past even the first level. If you can't help me I'm sure I'm going to have a nervous breakdown.
Scott Garrett, Stourbridge.

My dear boy, have a mug of hot milk to calm yourself down, for the solution to your problem is at hand. Once the game has loaded and the title screen 'tune' is warbling away, simply type in SERIALINTERFACE (note there are no spaces). After a bit of disk accessing, you'll discover that the cheat is now active - at any time during the game just press F9 to top up your energy and F10 to skip levels. Thank you for your cooperation.

SORRY! SURGERY IS CLOSED

Right, all low-price, groovy, sort-of-free software had better shape up or ship out because there's a new kid in town and he ain't taking any crap. After an epic battle, diddy Dave Upchurch has been kicked out of the PD Zone throne and Simon Byron now presides over the kingdom. Will the first subject please step up...





ELEVATION
17 Bit Software, disk 2328.

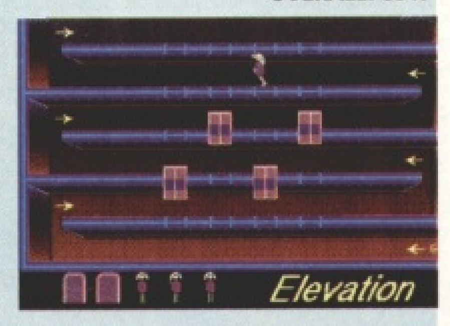
Looks can be deceiving, you know. Take those Pop Tart things, for example. They actually look really disgusting but, once you taste them, they turn out to be, um, really disgusting. Okay, perhaps that wasn't the best analogy to use, I'll think of another. Take this Elevation game, then. It looks like a rather crap PD game but is really very good. The main sprite may look as if he's been ripped out of Mister Wobbly Legs and the rest of the graphics like they've been drawn by a four year-old rabbit with a nervous disorder, but who cares? With a game as fun as this, it could come complete with leprosy and still be excellent.

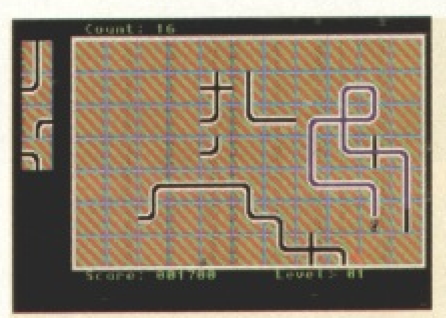
The plot, for what it's worth, involves guiding Mr Badly Drawn through a series of platform-infested levels. The trouble is, though, these rooms are littered with elevators (hence the name, see?) which are fatal to our hero. One slight brush against these moving lifts and it's a trip to computer heaven.

The hero is sent one way by moving the joystick and he will continue in that direction until the 'stick is moved the other way. The first level only contains one elevator and each screen increases in complexity until there's some very difficult lift dodging to be done.

Every time the bloke reaches the end of a platform, he's magically transported up a floor until he reaches the exit where he's greeted by a sampled 'marvellous' (which sounds a little like the 'lovely' in The Shamen's Ebeneezer Goode). Talking of music, Elevation plays a special rendition of Old MacDonald's Farm, complete with animal noises and everything, which sounds quite excellent. Elevation may not win awards for visual impressiveness but it sounds and plays like a dream and so makes it a worthy addition to any PD enthusiast's collection.

OVERALL: 83%





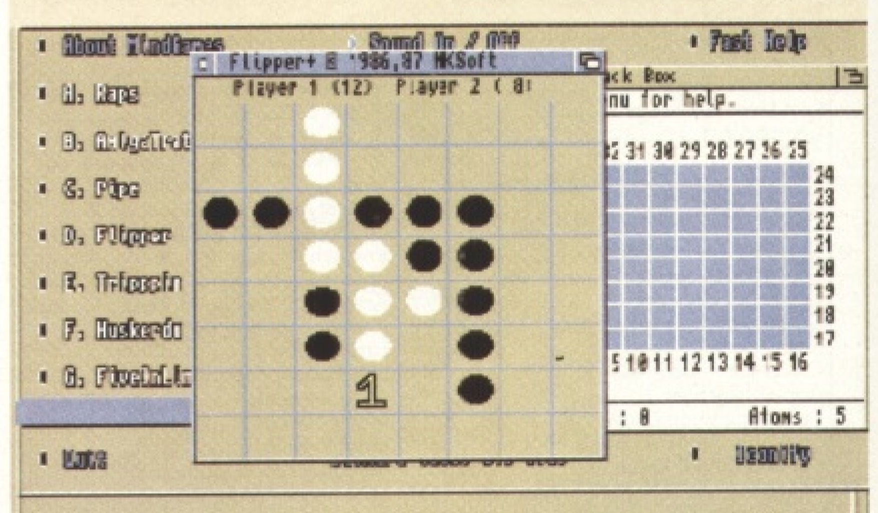
MIND GAMES
17 Bit Software, disk 2245.

Next up this month is an intellectually-stimulating collection of brain teasers to kick your grey matter back into work after the festive numbness of Christmas. The disk comprises twenty-one such teasers which span most types of puzzlers from mazes to slide puzzles. The whole collection is accessed from a Workbench menu and each game can be switched between at will. To be entirely honest, there's not one game which stands out from the crowd but they're all fairly taxing, if you like this sort of thing.

Perhaps the best game included in the collection is Crazy Pipes, a Pipemania-inspired "pipe-'em-up". There's only one real duffer and that's a ludicrous maze game which draws a random maze which you have to guide a red 'river'-type thing through. It's either far too easy or far too hard, depending on what level you choose, and not half as fun as solving a real, paper maze. The games here'll not convert traditional arcade players but if you're into puzzles and problems then it's definitely for you.

OVERALL: 80%





DOGS IN SPACE
Fortiss PD, Assassins disk 42

Oh dear. Dogs in Space is, if you haven't noticed from the screenshots, a Space Invaders clone. You could be mistaken for thinking that nobody could write a bad Space Invaders game but - hey! - that'll teach you to think because this version is awful.

Like Galaga '92 (see page 102), the gameplay has been physically abused and these changes don't add anything to the game at all. The major alteration is that some of the aliens require more than one shot to hit and can fire diagonally. Wow! I'm sure that there are other, more crucial and more original ways which Space Invaders can be improved (although I can't quite think of any at the moment, but that's not my job, is it?).

Yet again, in an effort to demonstrate a whiff of programming genius, the bloke behind this disgraceful effort has buggered up one of the simplest games known to mankind. There's a far better version of Space Invaders currently on the PD scene. It's called Amiga Invaders (clever!) and is an exact conversion, right down to the secret hit/miss ratio which calls up the big spaceship at the top of the screen. The underlying message of this review should be, therefore, perfectly clear. If you want to play Space Invaders then buy the other version instead.

OVERALL: 41%

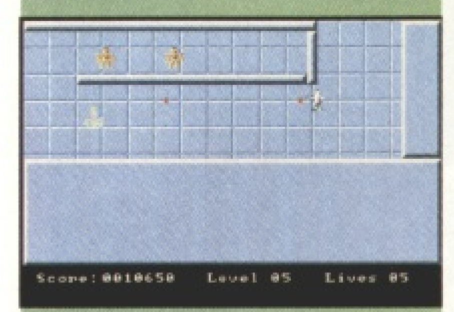




INTRUDER ALERT

Fortiss PD, Assassins disk 42.

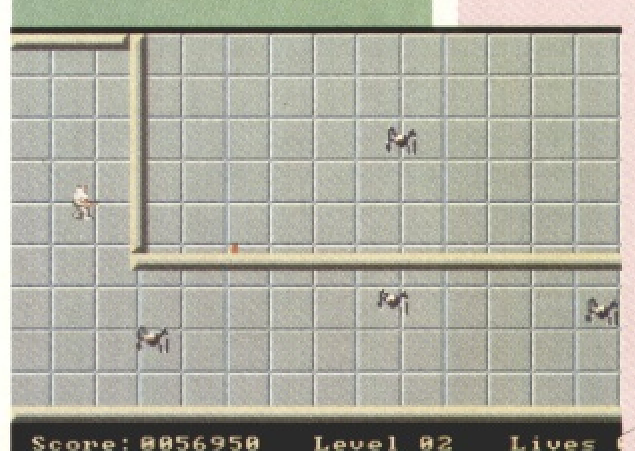
"Intruder Alert." "Ha-ha Humanoid and a bit which you couldn't understand." What do these phrases mean to you, then? Well, for the uninitiated, these are the lines that the booming aliens would spout whilst you enjoyed a game on the top-notch ancient arcade machine Berserk. With its simple graphics and even simpler gameplay, this is surely one conversion which would restore my faith in life, humanity, the government and all that sort of stuff.

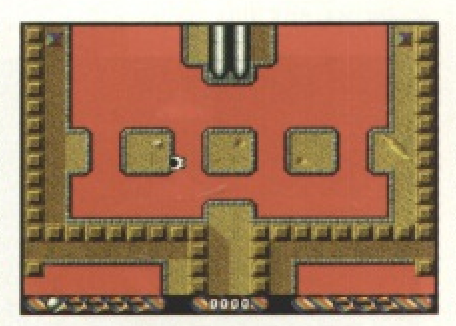


I'm going to let you down gently this time. The game starts with a couple of impressive title screens (one of which is full of eyeballs - mysterious) accompanied by some groovy sonics, there's an option screen which suggests that the game has much to offer and then:.. Arrrghh! Like Galaga and Dogs In A Crap Version Of Space Invaders, this version does no justice whatsoever to the game which inspired Llamatron and was the prequel to Smash TV. It's an all too familiar story - lousy graphics coupled with poorly thought-out gameplay. There are several glitches as well, which, apart from being visually annoying, actually cause the loss of a life if they contact you. Annoying or what?

Overall, then, you should stay well clear of this disgraceful effort, after all, you know what they say, a penny saved is a penny not spent on rubbish like Intruder Alert.

OVERALL: 39%





KASTLE KUMQUAT

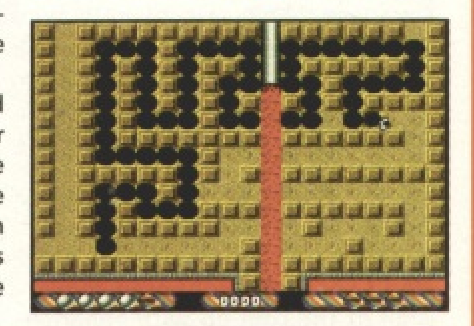
17 Bit Software, disk 2316.

I'll be honest with you before I begin. I'm not sure what this game's plot is or even its main objective but there's one thing that I'm absolutely sure about - it's a fine little game and no mistake. It's a top-down arcade adventure type thing which requires a good deal of maze negotiating and problem solving with the aim being (I think) to collect a number of flashing things (although why you're doing this isn't quite clear).

There's one screen which warrants a special mention (you'll find it up there in pictorial form). As you walk over the dimples in the sand, huge gaping holes open up which cannot be jumped over, so you need to plan your route prior to actually legging it through the maze. This sort of cunning trap is commonplace in Kastle Kumquat and elevates the game from being average to, erm, above average.

The graphics, although tiny and slightly lacking in detail, serve their purpose well and the little sprite moves like a right groover. The music, a dance track complete with sampled baselines and speech, is especially smart and drives the game forward in a boppy sort of way. It's worth paying £1.25 for the track alone but with a game that's as addictive as this you're onto a winner as soon as you place that order.

OVERALL: 75%





FIGHTING WARRIORS

17 Bit Software, disk 2321

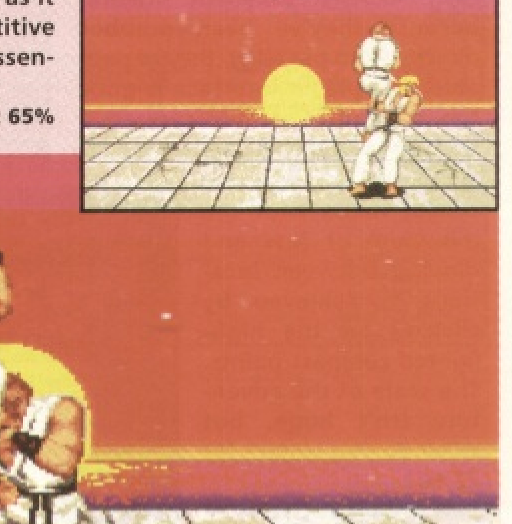
What's all this then? Even the severely sight-challenged among you will notice that Fighting Warriors bares more than a passing resemblance to a certain arcade conversion which was released last month. Yep, it's a direct copy of Street Fighter 2, written in AMOS. Whilst this may put you off somewhat, once you actually play the thing you'll notice that it's actually fairly playable version.

There are only two fighters (effectively Ken and Ryu), there's an important special move missing (the Dragon Punch) but it's a competent beat-'em-up all the same. People who have already played SF2 will be able to slip into the game without any delay as the special moves are performed using the same combination as the US Gold game. You can play against a friend or the computer but there is only one fighting backdrop which can make each level feel exactly the same as the previous - something which will annoy gamers who have become used to jetting around the world in SF2.

Fighting Warriors' biggest drawback is that people have had the opportunity to play the original version before having a go with this one and whilst it's unfair to hope for a better PD version, direct comparisons are inevitable. If there were a couple of additional characters and a few changes in the background scenery then it would have been a superb PD version but, as it stands, it soon becomes repetitive and, as such, isn't really an essential purchase.

OVERALL: 65%





GALAGA '92

Fortiss PD, Assassins disk 42.

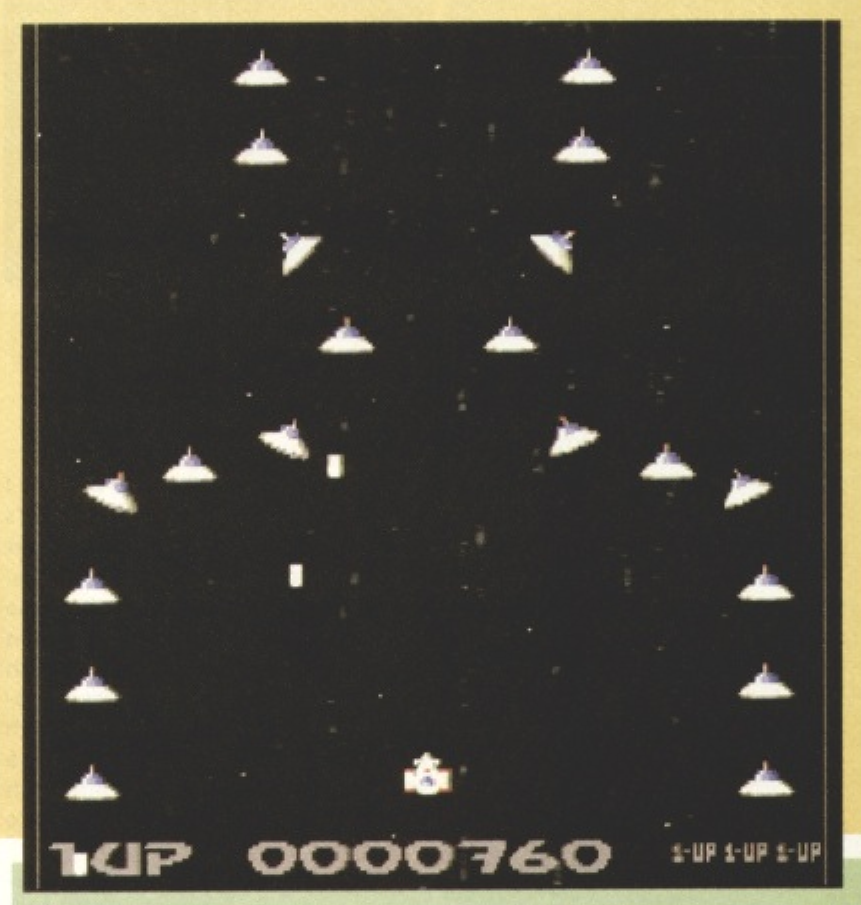
Galaga in the arcades, for those of you who don't know, was a variation on the tried-and-tested Space Invaders theme, except with two new and important twists - the invaders swooped in from the sides of the screen in a formation and, occasionally, you could pick up other ships to join you at the bottom of the screen and effectively double your firepower.

Galaga '92, for those of you who don't know, is a supposed conversion of the coin-op with enhancements that bring the game well into the 90s. Except it isn't. It is, in fact, a sluggish and ultimately boring shoot-'em-up which is primitive, slow and unpleasant to the eye. It's based around the same mildly addictive gameplay but the programmer, in his/her/its/their infinite wisdom has decided to include power-ups which vary from double-shot to speed up. The problem, though, is that the ship isn't exactly over-powered to begin with and every life that is lost means that the ship returns to its original, frustrating state.

The graphics aren't anything to write home about (most of the first level aliens look like coat-hangers), the sound is minimal and the game slows down terribly when there is too much action happening at once which, in gameplay terms at least, is not very often at all.

OVERALL: 52%



NEIGHBOURS GAME

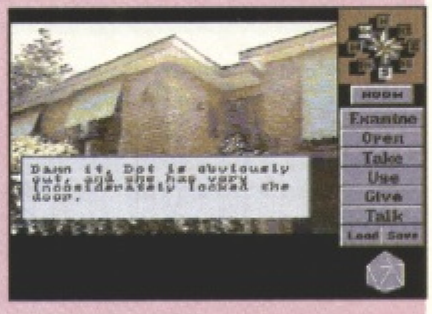
17 Bit Software, disks 2250A & B.

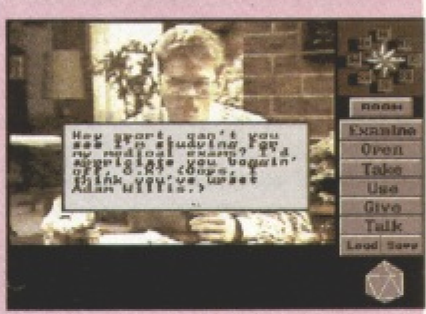
Now here's a rarity in PD games. Neighbours: The Adventure is a game written in AMOS and is, surprisingly, rather good. Nasty bloke Paul Robinson has decided, in his infinite wisdom, to sell off one of Soap-Land's most famous streets, namely Ramsey, and you have been charged with the task to stop him by whatever methods you deem appropriate.

PD adventures are usually of a low quality but this is a major exception. Every screen is accompanied by a digitised shot of the location with, more often than not, a suitable sound effect and although the clarity of the images isn't exactly excellent (mainly because they've been grabbed directly from the telly), they're passable. The player interface is good too. It's a nifty point-'n-click affair with no frills or spills and serves the adventure well. You can collect items with the minimum of fuss and moving between locations is achieved by clicking on the highlighted compass points. The scale of the adventure isn't huge, but what do you expect for £2.50?

It's obvious that a lot of care and attention has been lavished on this adventure and it will supply many hours of top-notch entertainment, especially when you consider that there's a few digitised screens of the sexy twins to ogle over if you get bored with the game itself (worth a few bob of anybody's money).

OVERALL: 83%







AMIGABOY

17 Bit Software, disk 2275.

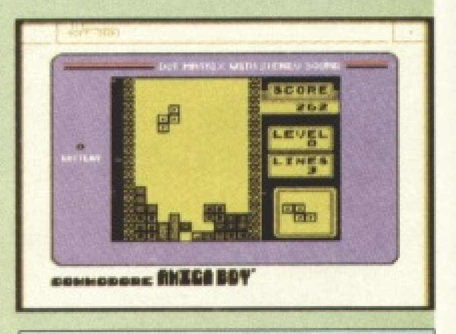
Tetris has to be one of the simplest and most widely-converted computer games of all time. From versions on the Spectrum to the dinky Tetris watch that you can purchase, it's a pretty safe bet that most people will have more than just a passing knowledge of the Russian game.

This version is an almost pixel perfect conversion of Game Boy Tetris, which is regarded by most as the best version on any format. Sad people will no doubt argue that a game with only black and white graphics cannot be any good but - hey! - who needs fancy visuals when the game is addictive as this? Not me, that's for sure. Even the little intro screens are almost identical (except the Nintendo logo which has cleverly been changed to Mintendo. Bet that'll stand up in court) and the music and spot effects have been sampled directly from the hand-held machine. The Tetris theme remains untouched and on many occasions I found myself being told to stop whistling by our grumpy Publisher. Boo!

Yep, if you like Tetris (and, if not, get a life, sad man) and you fancy playing a decent version then get out your wad and buy this. But remember, you can't take this on the train. (Right son, you're nicked - The Joke Police.)

OVERALL: 82%





STAY CALM! CONCENTRATE ON THESE NAMES...

Thanks to all our bloody great PD mates who supplied us with this month's games. They were, for those of you who are interested...

- **17 Bit Software,**
  1st Floor Offices,
  2/8 Market Street,
  Wakefield,
  WF1 1DH.
  Telephone: 0924 366982

- **Fortiss PD,**
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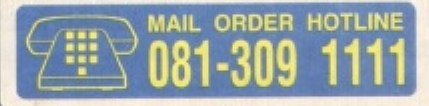
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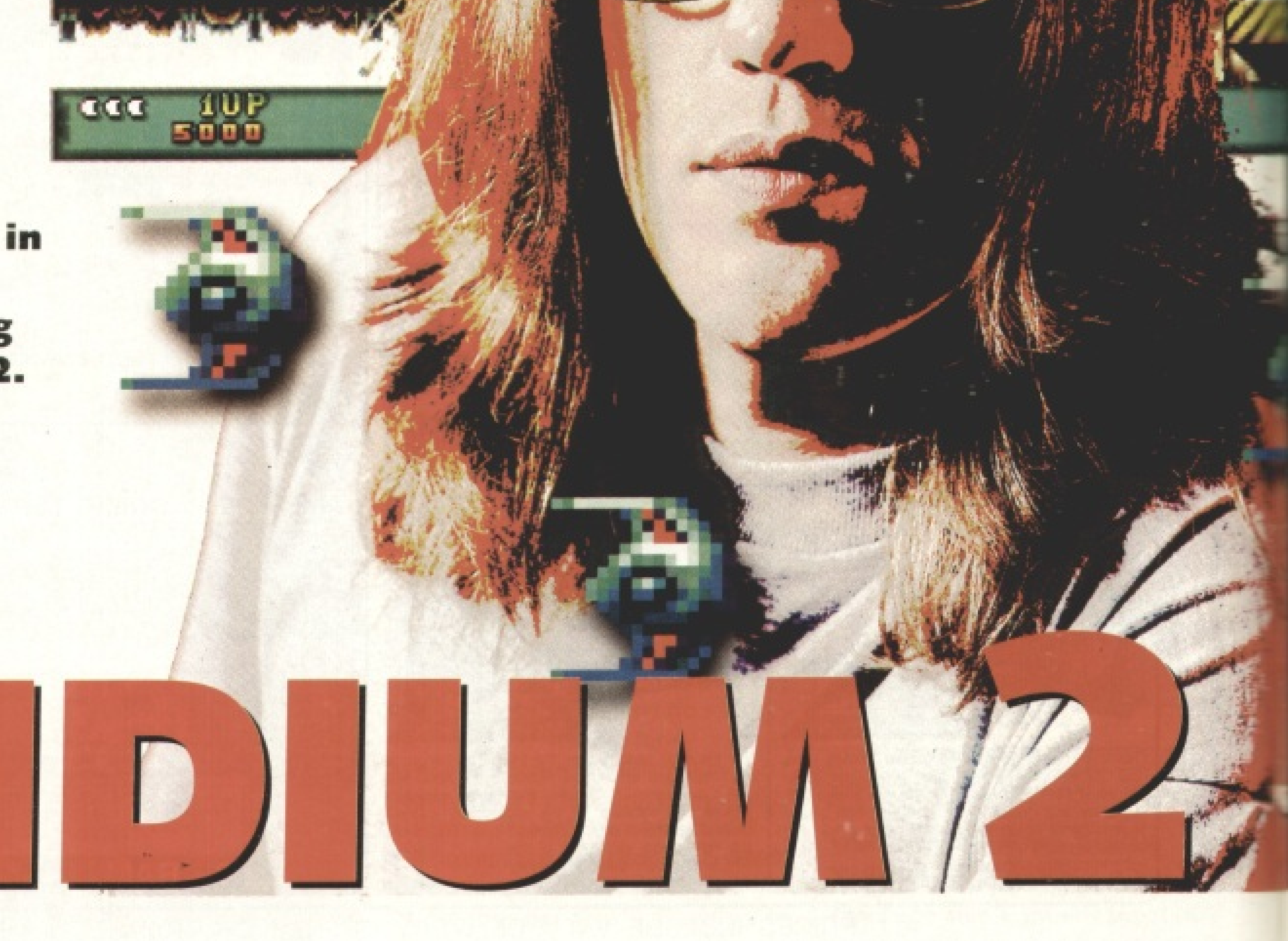
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Diary of a Game 7

While the rest of you were probably snoozing in front of the telly, polishing off endless Turkey sandwiches and wandering around 'confused' as a newt, Andrew Braybrook has been busting his hump over the festive period to ensure that you can be playing his latest shoot-'em-up blockbuster as soon as possible. And by now you're bound to know that all the gory details can only be found here, in Andrew's exclusive monthly diary serialising the creation of Uridium 2. This month we're in heaven 'cos we've reached Part Seven, and the end is nearly in sight. Well, almost...



URIDIUM 2

PART SEVEN NOVEMBER/DECEMBER

Wednesday 25th November

Had a further visit from Mr Rushbrook who has converted most of his background graphics from seven colours to thirty-two. Let's just say I'm not Mr Popularity at the moment. The extra colours certainly help though. Just a bit more tweaking and they'll be OK. I've also been hassling Mark for all the game graphics to be converted to his new palette. This requires re-mapping and, being a fussy person, some re-drawing of certain areas.

Thursday 26th November

Got some of the graphics through from Mark today. Just the central Manta ship to go and then we can concentrate on creating new graphics. Added a new torpedo weapon to destroy ground targets. Only the bombs and this new torpedo can knock out walls and what I call 'destructibles'. That way you have to destroy waves of fighters to gain the weapons with which to take out the rest of the dreadnought. Landing may then only be possible after the player has desrtroyed and knocked out a specified percentage of the enemy dreadnought.

Friday 27th November

Did anyone spot the Renegade/Graftgold-sponsored Lombard RAC rally car, number 120? Congratulations to Lloyd Shelley driving and Ray Berris navigating for starting 120th, finishing 64th and coming 8th in class N2.

Discovered how to do snakey-type multiple-sprite thingies today. Chris Wood has been here converting Fire & Ice to the PC and explained how to do it, and it's definitely cheating! We gave up after we had got to university-level mathematics using hyperbolic co-tangents and the like. Not the sort of thing you ask a 68000 chip to sort out at high speed.

Anyway, it turns out that as long as you keep at least one end of the snake moving it looks quite realistic just by each letting link of the snake take the average position of the ones on either side of it. Since all the links are updated sequentially then this averaging process is actually using half out-of-date positions as one link won't have been moved when its position is read. That actually produces a 'lagging behind' effect which looks more realistic. Now all I have to do is think of a place to use this in Uridium 2! Why is it that the simple solutions are often the best?



(Above left and right) The latest new dreadnought design in action. The game's getting harder now as the backgrounds are becoming littered with objects that the player must steer around. On later levels, the Manta must be turned on its side in order to squeeze through narrow gaps.

(Left and below) As new graphics arrive and are implemented, parts of Uridium 2 are beginning to look more reminiscent of the C64 original. Note the tall towers, which the player's ship can crash into - all collisionable objects have yellow and black warning surrounds.

Tuesday 1st December
Just time to make up a couple of demo disks to take to London as we are talking to certain parties regarding the production of some music especially for Uridium 2 by some well-known chart personalities. All top secret, hush-hush, say-no-more at the moment.

Wednesday 2nd December
Came up with a new method of controlling all the destructibles. Up till now for every destructible block on the background there has been an invisible object sitting there waiting to be hit by a bomb. When it does, it updates the map and the screens, produces an explosion, gives away some points and finally makes a note that it has been destroyed so it doesn't come back. That fits nicely with our system but is a bit wasteful as most of the time there are no bombs flying about.

A structure re-arrangement needs to be made so that a bomb going off has a look for itself on the map to see if any blocks are destructible. The only processing that needs to be done is therefore by the bomb. The fly in the ointment is that something must keep track of destroyed blocks, for both players, so that they stay destroyed if the players swap over due to pilot error. There is still need for a list of destructibles and I need a fast search algorithm to mow through the list and find the relevant entry to tick it off. A sequential search is NOT very efficient; there is a better way.

Thursday 3rd December
Wrote the necessary binary chop search algorithm which was a useful exercise at least in proving that finding the average of two numbers is not particularly fast in 68000. Although the binary search always gets to the required entry in a few attempts, each attempt is a lot slower than just hacking through all the entries sequentially - about five times slower to be precise. Can you be precise when using the word 'about'?

Things had just got to the stage where I'd got everything working silky-smoothly when Mark comes in and asks for it to be able to blow up a four-block square object as one, which I could accommodate (and I only put that word in 'cos I can spell it), and then I realised that all of today's and yesterday's work has been a bit of a waste of time.

There's a considerably easier way to do all this keeping track of destructibles that I would expect just about any other programmer to do, and that's to just save away all 32K of the map (one for each player - making 64K) each time the player is destroyed. That way all the destructible blocks are just there waiting in the map for next time. No fancy search algorithm, no having to list all the destructibles, no having to go through that list destroying all the ones already hit and all it costs is 64K of fast RAM. Got buckets of that - don't know what to do with all the damn stuff!

Friday 4th December
In went the map preserve and restore routines and out went the binary search routine. Shame, that, because it was rather clever. Trouble is that it wasn't blatantly clever - not that preserving the map is blatantly clever either, but it's certainly faster than the old method so in it stays.

Having two graphics artists working on a game starts creating file-naming problems. I was numbering the fleets of dreadnoughts in the sequence that they were being created in, and Mark is numbering them in the order that they will end up in the game. Result: Fleets go missing as they get copied onto my hard disk as the same number gets used twice. A massive renaming exercise was therefore





(Left) The two Mantas, one in computer-controlled 'drone' mode, skim the surface of one of the dreadnoughts from the first fleet, whose biomechanical, skeletal structure probably owes a lot to the work of H.R. Giger.

undertaken to organise everything so that no more accidents occur.

On a lighter note, my desk has moved seven feet to the left to fit even more graphics artists into the room. Question: How many graphics artists does it take to change a light bulb? Answer: One, but you have to impress upon him the importance of not changing the light bulb at all, it's really good as it is.

Monday 7th December

Another re-vamp of all the weapons occurred today. The torpedo weapon is officially in, to enable the destruction of certain weaker wall sections; the chaser weapon has been tightened up as it has trouble when it is on the trail of moving objects; the bombs were affecting too wide an area causing too much mayhem too quickly so they've been cut down a bit; and the ioniser weapon has been changed from two thin bursts of toothpaste to one thicker one. Miscellaneous fixes also included making the last smart bomb fired actually work and the bonus score pods give points to the correct player, both howlers in their own rights.

And did I say last Thursday that I'd got buckets of fast RAM? Well, the cupboard is bare and the doggie is going to have to eat cake, or - to put it another way - whoops, I've used all the memory up.

Tuesday 8th December

Got a new map, Ship Two of Fleet One to be precise, so I had to put in all the meany generation points, activating the lifts that bring ships to the runways and all the Uridimine ports. Also put in collisionable walls for the first time, which highlighted an ongoing problem, i.e. you just can't see the high walls until it's too late. Put some black and yellow warning stripes round the edge of the wall, and then tried putting some garish patterns on the wall tops. Tried various wallpaper designs before settling on a throbbing colour pattern. More 'art deco' than military camouflage, but playability is at stake here, you know.

A concession to one of Jason's moans is that you can now fire other bullets while the shield is up so you don't get impatient waiting for it to run out. Also in is a fade to all white as the dreadnought melts away for dramatic effect. It also speeds up the proceedings somewhat.

Wednesday 9th December

The latest addition is a 'gunsight' for the torpedo weapon so you can see where the torpedo is going to land more easily. The calculation to find the right landing position is rather hairy as the torpedo is fired from a moving platform so it takes the speed of the firer, adds a constant speed for the action of firing and then arcs down to the ground, and the sight has to know where it's going to hit.

Gun turrets that appear from inside the dreadnought have been added. A small hatchway opens and the guns raise up, fire one shot and then retreat underground.

Friday 11th December

Blowing hot & cold on the A1200.

Monday 14th December

The game has started running out of memory all over the place so it's getting quite tight in there. First plan was to cut down on the amount of map that I saved for remembering all the destructibles. Then it hit me.. Why save all the map? Why not scan it for character codes that have been destroyed and just remember where they are? Even preserving 1,000 possible locations for each player only uses 4K, not 64K. The restore map then just reads the list of destroyed locations, updates the map before the player restarts and it's all ready to go. This is the third method tried and also the simplest, smallest and quickest.

Tuesday 15th December

Spent all day working on some routines to convert RGB colours to HSV colours. Anyone who has played with DPaint and changed the palette will probably have noticed that you get two sets of three sliders to adjust the colours. RGB colours is how the hardware expects you to supply colour information and HSV is just another way of specifying colours, like using Matabele Gumbo Beads for money. It's just that the translation is a bit tricky, you see.

No manuals really go into details about how to do it so, as it's an artistic matter, why not ask a graphic artist? Why not then ask them how to nail jelly to the ceiling? They'll be grateful I worked this out one day. By the way, the reason for doing this, other than that it's been something I've wanted to know how to do for some time, is that when you're fading between certain colours using RGB values you get undesirable colours in between. The old Atari 800 uses a system more like HSV, it had sixteen colours, and sixteen brightnesses of those colours, great for metallic effects. Some of those colour fades aren't even reproducible on the Amiga.

Anyway, the maths was a bit tricky, not complicated but messy, but now I can convert from RGB to HSV and back, the horrendous bit turned out to be fading between two HSV values. It all hinges on defining a circle of ninety hues (the H in HSV), then deciding how much white is NOT mixed in (the S in HSV, for saturation of colour, lack of white) and finally the brightness of the resulting colour (the V in HSV, for... voluminosity, or something)!

Then to fade you just rotate around the circle of colours by the shortest route and move in and out of the circle for brightness, with a bit of up and down for saturation. Marvellous, eh? How does this affect me, I hear you ask? Well, maybe in a game or two I will use these routines to more effect but for now the Manta glows prettier colours and that's it!

Wednesday 16th December

Added shadows to all the walls on Mark's new deck and put in some appropriate meanies, like space ships on the runways and Uriditanks on the surface. Spent much of the rest of the day marvelling at all the sexy new instructions on the 68020 chip, as featured in the Amiga 1200. They (Motorola) seem to have thought of all the things that are awkward to do on a 68000 and added new instructions and addressing modes to handle them. Wow! By the way, I still don't know if the A1200 has any more sprites than previous Amigas. Probably, as the advert goes.

Friday 18th December

It's a 'Thinking about the game design day'. That's my excuse, anyway, for writing a grand total of six lines of code. But as we programmers say, as long as they're a good six lines of code...! Had a drink of coloured water at lunchtime and it turns out that one of our graphics artists is a kleptomaniac. I promised John I wouldn't say who it was though. The very fabric of society is coming apart at the seams. It's a sad old world.

Monday 21st December

I'm making the reactors more difficult to kill by allowing them to shoot back, and they also have satellites to absorb shots. I have to really sort out the underground bit as we only have some test graphics and no real layouts as such.

Work stopped rather abruptly for the Graftgold Christmas lunch at The Victoria which got an all-round thumbs-up. Unfortunately for Uridium 2 not a lot of work got done in the afternoon. Some of our Christmas stash of drinks bit the big one and everyone ziggy-zaggied off home into the sunset. More thinking and designing will need to be done over the festive season ready for some gratuitous programming in the New Year.



(Right) More action above that Giger-inspired dreadnought. Here the collisionable walls are really obvious - just look at those chevrons! Doesn't stop them being easy to smash into, though...



PREVIEWS

Now that the Christmas and New Year festivities are over, it's time once again to buckle down and get serious. Hey, this is 1993, and we're in for another twelve stonking months of Amiga bonkers-ness. Will this be the Amiga's best ever year? We wouldn't want to go out on a limb, but with the A1200 picking up speed and a few other tasty innovations on the way, we reckon that the trusty beige box has got plenty more tricks up its sleeve. However, with many publishers having used up their top-name products over Christmas, there isn't really anything truly mouth-watering on the horizon - the next batch of biggies is due to start surfacing in the Spring, as is traditional. In the meantime, though, there's no shortage of decent stuff on the way, and once again we've hand-picked five of the best newies coming your way over the next couple of months for another quintet of first looks.

FA PREMIER LEAGUE FOOTBALL

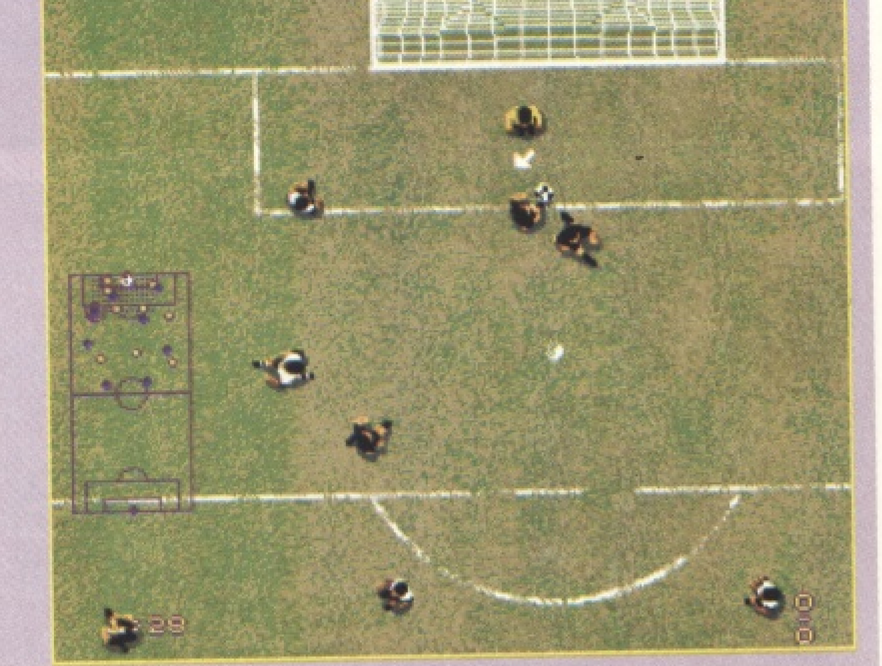
(Ocean)

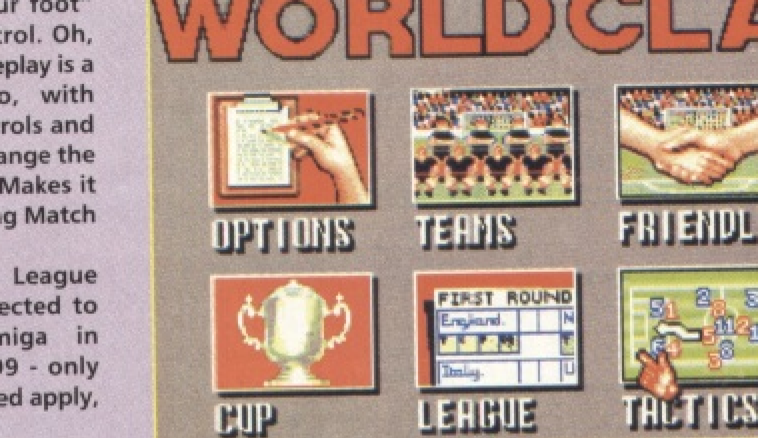
Is there really any point in bringing any more football games onto the market after the all-conquering Sensible Soccer? Probably not, but it hasn't stopped Ocean having a stab at the all-too tricky genre. Actually, this one was originally devised and developed by Audiogenic Software, but the little company hasn't been having a great time of it financially lately, and Ocean recently stepped in to buy up the rights to a number of its titles, including this one, which was intended to be part of 'Genic's Sports Action range, along with Rugby and the still-to-appear Graham Gooch Cricket. The original title of World Class Soccer has since been replaced thanks to some handy last minute grabbing of the official Premier League licence.

Premier League is strictly an arcade-style football game, with no complex strategic or management overtones - you can play leagues and cups, and fiddle with team formations, but beyond that it's action all the way. It sounds like pretty run-of-the-mill stuff, but in fact the game is promising a handful of innovative features that should help lift it out of the ordinary. Action replays, authentic team strips and the like are only to be expected these days, but Premier League also boasts a smart twin view system, so you can play the game from a side-on view like Manchester United or smaller scale birds-eye perspective a la Sensisoccer. Whichever you choose the graphics on display are some of the most impressive we've seen in a while. Three different passing systems are also on offer, although they're all based around that old favourite "ball sticks to your foot" method of control. Oh, and the action replay is a bit special too, with video-style controls and the ability to change the camera angles. Makes it just like watching Match of the Day.

FA Premier League Football is expected to arrive on Amiga in March at £25.99 - only 1Mb owners need apply, by the way.

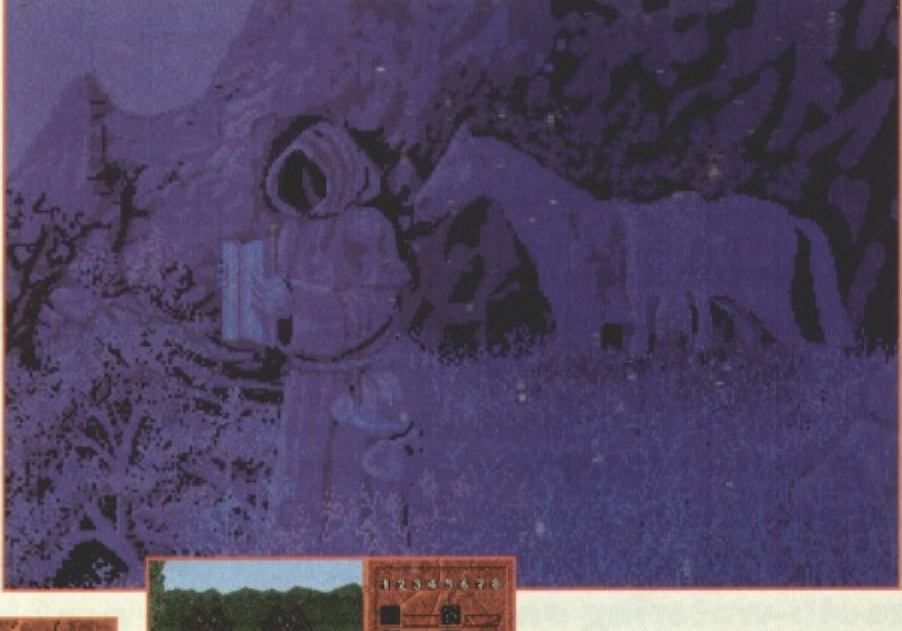








ABANDONED PLACES 2
(I.C.E)



After a rip-roaring start with the excellent Fireforce, ICE is trying its hand at the fantasy role-playing genre with the sequel to one of last year's lesser-known RPGs. Abandoned Places 2 is, according to the official blurb, going to be the biggest advancement in roleplaying in years - well, it'll have to go some to beat the ground broken by Legends of Valour, but we're always ready to give a game the benefit of the doubt.

AP2's scenario is typically FRP-ish. An evil force known as Pendugmalhe has been causing bovver around the world in search of a magic sword and as the young adventurer, your job (sorry, quest) is to make sure he doesn't get his mitts on it. That forms the main part of the action, although the game is broken down into smaller mini-quests that sprout off from the central story. Despite its ground-breaking claims, AP2 doesn't look that different to any other Dungeon Master clone to the untrained eye. It does, however, offer over 25 computer characters to choose from and a new user-friendly interface that allows for quick commands and "one-touch" spell casting, which is always handy when you're battling away against a bunch of bloodthirsty hellhounds intent on your demise.



Boasting an elaborate scene-setting introductory sequence, 64-colour graphics, a gigantic 32-level inner dungeon and an action window that is reputedly bigger than any other RPG's, Abandoned Places 2 also allows you to port characters in from the original game, so enthusiasts who have built up a rapport with their on-screen pals shouldn't be disappointed. From what we've seen so far this is one that should keep RPG fans well pleased for quite a while. You'll be able to find out for sure next month when the game is released and we give it the once-over.

PRIME MOVER (Psygnosis)



The superb No Second Prize may have set the new standard for vector-based motorbike games but in the arcade-style Super Hang-On department it's still the original conversion of Sega's arcade classic that rules the roost, some four years after its original release. That, however, may well be all set to change with the imminent arrival on the scene of Prime Mover (working title), which a team of hitherto-unknown Danish programmers Interactivision have now almost completed for Psygnosis. With the biking game void as expansive as it is, the coders have gone back to basics with Prime Mover, offering little in the way of fancy frills and concentrating instead on super-speed hell-for-leather racing all the way. You race on tracks in nine countries around the world against seven other bikes, and the camera angle is hung low to the ground behind the player's cycle, which makes for an interesting graphical perspective and some heart-in-mouth moments when going over hills and not knowing what lies beyond.



Providing that it lives up to its promises (quite simply that it will be the fastest and most playable game of its kind), Prime Mover should come as a refreshing change to the racing genre. As good as they are, car-based racers are becoming a little samey, and it's odd that we don't see more bike games as they offer more potential for seat-of-the-pants action than those boring steel boxes with a wheel at each corner. Nothing particularly innovative is being promised, but then it's often the games with the more down-to-earth approach that the most satisfying action is to be found. You can expect to see it arrive in mid March.







WOODY'S WORLD

(Vision Software)

In a move that comes completely out of the blue, New Zealandish developers Vision Software (the team that produced the superb Microbes and Cybernetix games, as featured on our coverdisks) have taken the bold step from shareware game programmers to professional software publisher. The first game from the new company is Woody's World, a game being hailed (admittedly by themselves) as "the largest platform game ever developed for the Amiga computer".

Woody's World is a cutesy game (surprise, surprise) in which the player, as the elven hero Woody, must rid six castles of the baddies that have infested them. It all looks and sounds exceedingly Mario-ish, featuring all manner of power-ups, secret rooms, coins and plenty of baddies with heads just itching to be jumped on. And, of course, there's the inter-level bonus rounds, which in this case see Woody playing a Wheel of Fortune style game and, after destroying each castle, engaged in a high-speed race on a rollercoaster track.

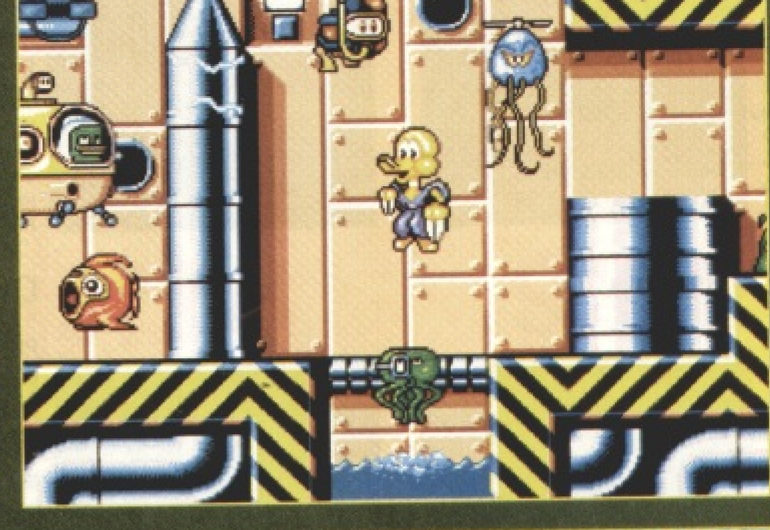
"We've decided to take the 1Mb Amiga standard and fit as much game into this configuration as possible," claim Vision. "Our main priorities with Woody's World are to pack the game full of challenge without frustrating the player with unfair traps." Featuring over 60 levels based around 20 graphic styles, and all scrolling at a 50th (programmers love to tell people that their game runs at a 50th) Woody's World is set for release in March. It certainly looks very pretty, and given Vision's track record on the shareware circuit, this one could turn out to be a real head-turner. Could we be looking at the new Team 17? That remains to be seen, but it will certainly be interesting to see how Woody's World stacks up against Superfrog, due out at around the same time.

DONG

(Global Software)

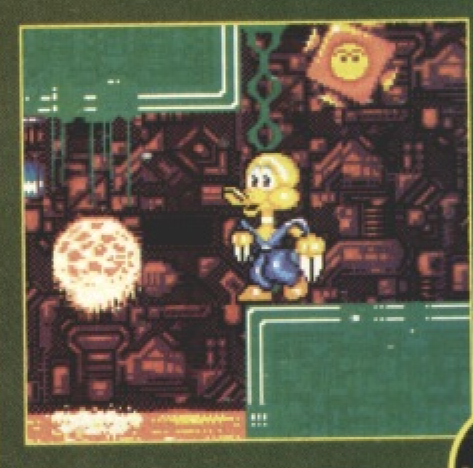
Cor, eh? A nod's as good as a wink to a blind bat. Of course, anybody with an ounce of imagination doesn't need prompting from the likes of us to notice that the latest platformer to emerge for the Amiga has a bit of a rudey title. And lots of other rude stuff in it, in fact. Dong (chuckle) is a platform game, and like Woody's World elsewhere in this section, is the first commercial product from a team that have so far been whiling away the time pumping out rather good public domain games.

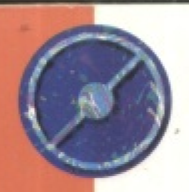
In this case it's little known three-piece outfit The Hidden who are making the quantum leap into the big leagues, and they make no bones about the fact that they fancy themselves as the new Team 17. And there are bound to be a few similarities between Dong (snigger) and that company's forthcoming Superfrog, not least of which in the Benny Hill department. It's all good clean fun of course - Dong is a mutant samurai duck whose mortal enemy is the Big Bad Dick (oh dear).





Casting the rest of the redundant storyline aside, what Dong boils down to is 2000 screens of super-smooth scrolling stuff featuring over 60 kinds of bad guys and quite a few tributes to the likes of Mario along the way. Power-ups come in the form of eggs which Dong lays and then cracks open to retrieve the goody inside - shield, go-faster legs and a variety of weapons are among the collectables on display. Dong is due for release via Global Software sometime between now and the spring - and at a mid-range pricepoint of only £15.99, it's probably going to be well worth a look.





RECOMMENDED

Oooh, isn't it depressing, all this dark n' gloomy weather? Gets me right down, I can tell you. And when I'm that low there's only one thing that perks me up again, and that's a smart gaming experience in the form of a new piece of software - I guess you're probably the same. But don't risk wasting your Xmas gift vouchers on a naff title that you'll want to wipe over before tea-time, have a gander through the pages following and get the low-down on all the games that we here at EMAP Towers 'recommend'. And remember to pay attention - there will be questions later...

The Addams Family

90%

Publisher	Ocean
Issue Reviewed	June 1992
Memory	512K
Price	£25.99

Guide Gomez across tonnes of massive levels in an effort to rescue the rest of his family in one of the finest platform romps to appear on the Amiga so far. Bundles of secret rooms, devious traps and fluid playability make this film tie-in a 'must buy' for all avid fans of the platforming genre.

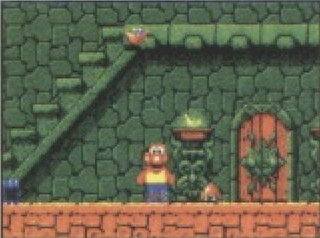


The Aquatic Games

84%

Publisher	Millennium
Issue Reviewed	October 1992
Memory	512K
Price	£25.99

Although this type of 'waggle your sticks' sport game went out with Noah, The Aquatic Games injects new life into the old dog by introducing a number of unusual events. Packed full of cartoony visuals and aided by a bouncy soundtrack, the AG's should entertain most owners with a sense of humour.

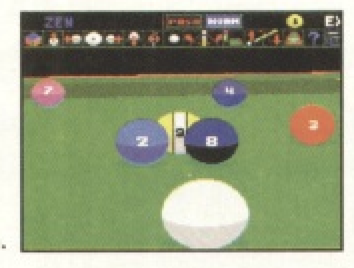


Archer Maclean's Pool

90%

Publisher	Virgin Games
Issue Reviewed	October 1992
Memory	512K
Price	£25.99

When Jimmy White's Whirlwind Snooker was first released, the public lapped it up in droves. Archer has used the same game engine to produce a game which is arguably better than Snooker due to the fact that Pool is a more accessible and easier to play sport. If you missed out on JWWS then you'd better pot this 'un.



Ashes of Empire

80%

Publisher	Mirage
Issue Reviewed	June 1992
Memory	1Mb
Price	£29.99

From the team that brought you Midwinter comes this, another 3D strategy game in a very similar style. Supposedly based in a pseudo-Eastern Europe, it's the player's task to bring peace and harmony to the world via trading and the occasional bit of combat. Stunning fractal 3D landscapes.



Assassin

92%

Publisher	Team 17
Issue Reviewed	November 1992
Memory	1Mb
Price	£25.99

Assassin is a Strider-based arcade shoot-'em-up which blows the rest of the rest of the feeble attempts clean out of the water. With perfect control, five massive levels, gorgeous graphics, inspiring sonics... Need we go on? Assassin should be in everybody's software collection, now!



Beast 3

90%

Publisher	Psygnosis
Issue Reviewed	September 1992
Memory	1Mb
Price	£29.99

Whilst the first two Beast games were lovely to look at but crappy to play, Beast 3 show exactly how it should have been done. It's still dreamy to watch but underneath the visuals there's a right stonker of a game. The cleverly designed puzzles and frantic non-stop action should keep most entertained for weeks.

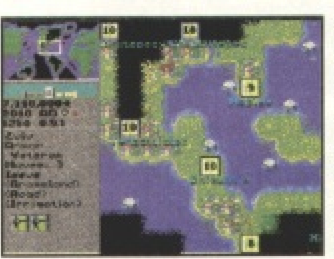


Civilization

81%

Publisher	Microprose
Issue Reviewed	August 1992
Memory	1Mb
Price	£29.99

Sid Meier does it again - and you thought he couldn't beat Railroad Tycoon! Your job? Evolve your populace up from the Stone Age to the 20th Century and beyond. The strain of the port from PC to Amiga shows sometimes in the disk accessing, but the involving strategic gameplay more than compensates.



Crazy Cars 3

90%

Publisher	Titus
Issue Reviewed	August 1992
Memory	512K
Price	£25.99

Another series of games where the third proved to be the best of the bunch. Forget the previous two, or most other sprite-based racers - this game is one of the contenders for the racing trophy. It scrolls, plays and moves so well that you'd be a fool to let this one overtake you.



D/Generation

89%

Publisher	Mindscape
Issue Reviewed	July 1992
Memory	512K
Price	£19.99



A throwback to the old days when isometric games ruled the waves, D/Generation hides its storming gameplay underneath some 'alright' graphics. An arcade adventure in its purest form, immensely suspenseful and cheap as well, you should seriously think again if this isn't in your disk box.

Dune

90%

Publisher	Virgin Games
Issue Reviewed	June 1992
Memory	1Mb
Price	£29.99



Based on the 'classic' David Lynch movie, in Dune it's your job to harvest the Spice while battling the evil Harkonnens on the surface of the arid desert world Arrakis. Don't be fooled by the graphic adventure-ish graphics - this is a thinking man's game, albeit one blessed with easy accessibility and superb playability.

Eye of the Beholder 2

87%

Publisher	US Gold
Issue Reviewed	May 1992
Memory	1Mb
Price	£25.99

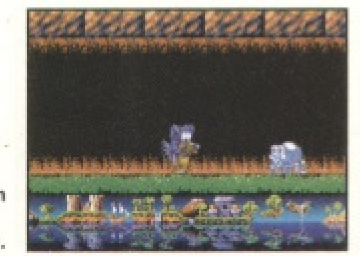


If 3D role playing adventures are your 'thing' then you can do no better than Beholder 2. Although it doesn't really improve over the original, it's still a huge and awe-inspiring game which will take some time to complete. It's looking slightly dated when compared to the flashy RPGs that are now appearing.

Fire & Ice

92%

Publisher	Renegade
Issue Reviewed	May 1992
Memory	512K
Price	£25.99

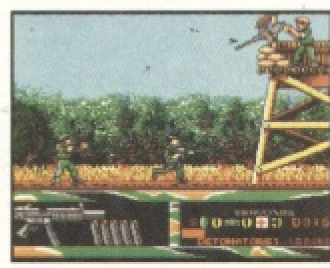


Another superb console-type platform game which shows that the Amiga can do it just as well as those fiddly cartridge machines. Guide Cool Coyote around the many levels in an effort to defeat the evil Wizard in his desert domain. With unique gameplay elements and terrific playability you'll miss this one at your peril.

Fireforce

90%

Publisher	ICE
Issue Reviewed	October 1992
Memory	512K
Price	£25.99

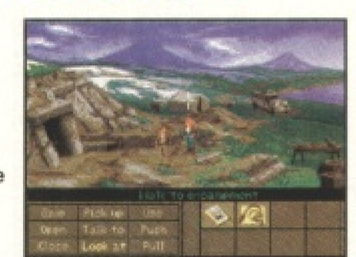


Yet another blast from the past, Fireforce has distinctly Green Beret origins. Who cares where it comes from when the end product is this good? Violence and more violence (with some distinctly realistic throat-slitting) make this horizontally scroller a game which you should hide from your granny.

Indy Jones IV (Adventure)

88%

Publisher	US Gold
Issue Reviewed	January 1993
Memory	1Mb
Price	£37.99

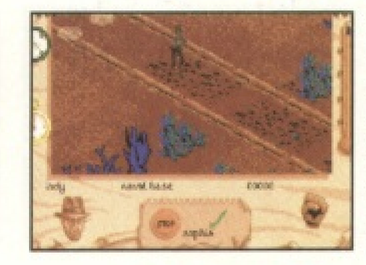


Many consider Indy IV to be the best graphic adventure ever and thanks to its superb graphics and sound, multiple plot paths and marvellous atmosphere they're not far wrong. However, on Amiga the enjoyment is marred slightly by extreme slowness in places and some annoying disk swapping problems.

Indy Jones IV (Arcade)

82%

Publisher	US Gold
Issue Reviewed	May 1992
Memory	1Mb
Price	£25.99

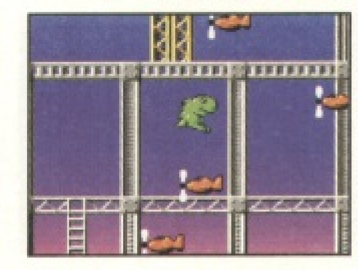


Although Indy hasn't fared too well in the arcade game dept up till now, this isometric-3D arcade adventure more than rectifies the matter. Its blend of puzzles and action is just right (even though the control can be a little fiddly in places) and should keep any fan of The Man with the Hat more than happy.

Hoi

90%

Publisher	Hollyware
Issue Reviewed	August 1992
Memory	512K
Price	£25.99



A super-cute platform jobby that constantly astounds, Hoi is a surprise star on the Amiga. Help the 'saur through five bloody huge levels in one of the most smoothly playable games yet. With real gameplay variation this looks set to become a timeless wonder.

Ishar

87%

Publisher	Silmarils
Issue Reviewed	May 1992
Memory	512K
Price	£25.99



We may disagree with the Frenchies over trivial little things like Maastricht, but you've got to admit they know how to write damn fine RPGs. Although the first-person 3D system is a bit like every other you've seen (although prettier than most), the excellent plots more than compensate for any sense of deja vu.

Jaguar XJ220

85%

Publisher	Core Design
Issue Reviewed	June 1992
Memory	1Mb
Price	£25.99



It seems like the World and his wife is doing some sort of licensed car racing game these days, but Core's effort manages to pull away from the pack quite elegantly thanks to some impressively-fast 3D and an excellent easy-to-use track designer (which in our estimation is far better than Lotus 3's RECS anyday).

The Legend of Kyrandia

93%

Publisher	Virgin Games
Issue Reviewed	November 1992
Memory	1Mb
Price	£29.99

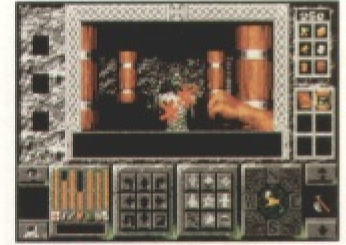


A graphic adventure in the Monkey Island 2 model. As Brandon, your only chance of resuscitating your turned-to-stone Grandad is by defeating the mad jester Malcolm (the best villain to have appeared in an Amiga game yet). Lots of truly gorgeous graphics and an inspired player interface.

Legends of Valour

92%

Publisher	US Gold
Issue Reviewed	December 1992
Memory	1Mb
Price	£25.99

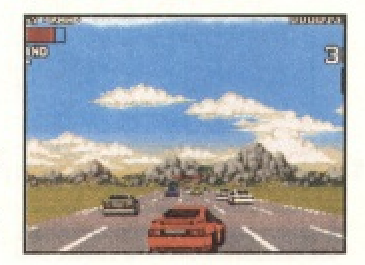


LoV uses an amazing graphics engine to generate the most realistic 3D environment you ever seen! It gives you total freedom of movement in the fantasy gameworld and makes this one of the most atmospheric RPGs yet! Destined to be hailed a classic, you'd be foolish to miss it.

Lotus 3

86%

Publisher	Gremlin
Issue Reviewed	October 1992
Memory	512K
Price	£25.99



The third Lotus instalment mixes the best of the two previous offerings and ends up with a game which will satisfy all. With laps or circuits, a variety of race conditions and an unusual course designer, Gremlin have produced a real winner. You still can't wreck the Lotuses, though!

Lure of the Temptress

90%

Publisher	Virgin Games
Issue Reviewed	July 1992
Memory	1Mb
Price	£25.99

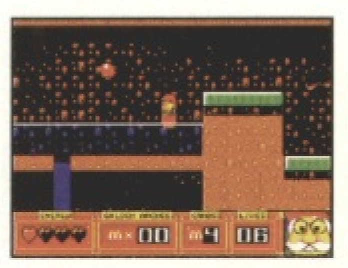


An impressive debut by Revolution, an English based programming team, Lure improves over the standard graphical adventure by way of its real character interaction. The non-playing characters all go about their own business, chatting to to each other and the like, making this the closest game to real life yet.

McDonalds Land

90%

Publisher	Virgin Games
Issue Reviewed	December 1992
Memory	1Mb
Price	£25.99

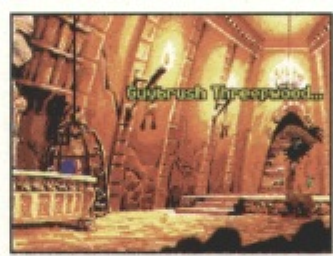


Yet another attempt to 'do' Mario on the Amiga, this one succeeds thanks to superb playability and some interesting twists on old platforming themes. Of course it's barely got an ounce of originality but who cares when the game's this much fun? Want a great platform game? You got it!

Monkey Island 2

94%

Publisher	US Gold
Issue Reviewed	July 1992
Memory	1Mb
Price	£37.99



What else is there left to say? The game to end all graphical adventures with genuine humour and gorgeous hand-painted graphics improves in every way over the original (a task in itself). The disk accessing is a trifle too much but the overall package is one of the best you'll ever see on the Amiga.

No Second Prize

91%

Publisher	Thalion
Issue Reviewed	December 1992
Memory	1Mb
Price	£25.99

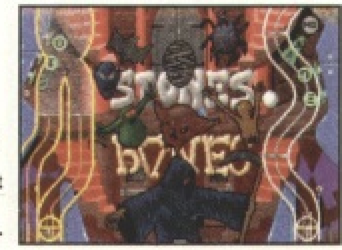


NSP is arguably the first bike game to actually make you feel like you're astride a throbbing metal monster. Where it scores most over its predecessors is the ease of control the player has over the bike - it's sheer bliss! Virtually faultless, it ranks alongside such other racing classics as Lotus and F1GP.

Pinball Dreams

89%

Publisher	21st Century
Issue Reviewed	April 1992
Memory	512K
Price	£25.99



Arguably the best of the Pinball duo, Dreams is a masterpiece in programming. The ball movement is so real that you'll be soon wondering why anybody bothers to play the real thing. Four tables may not sound like much but in a game with no 'end' there is endless amounts of fun to be found here.

Putty

87%

Publisher	System 3
Issue Reviewed	October 1992
Memory	1Mb
Price	£25.99

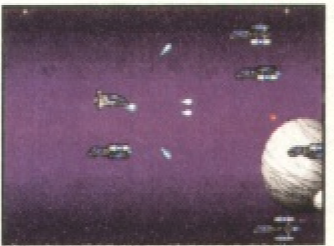


A high-flyer in the charts - and deservedly so. Putty is one of the most original games, let alone platform games, to have appeared in a long time. As a tiny little blue blob, the player has to slip, stretch and absorb his way around umpteen gaudy levels, rescuing robots from an evil wizard's minions. Try it - you'll like it!

Project-X

90%

Publisher	Team 17
Issue Reviewed	May 1992
Memory	1Mb
Price	£25.99

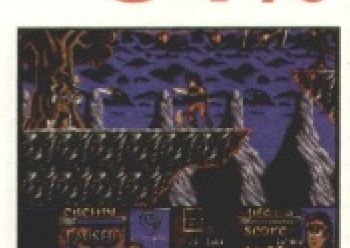


Perhaps THE best shoot-'em-up to appear on any home computer, Project-X is superb in every way. Arcade quality graphics, amazing speech samples, fifty frames per second scrolling all add up to make it a blaster's dream. It may be a little hard for the wimps among us, but don't let that deter you

Risky Woods

84%

Publisher	Electronic Arts
Issue Reviewed	July 1992
Memory	512K
Price	£25.99

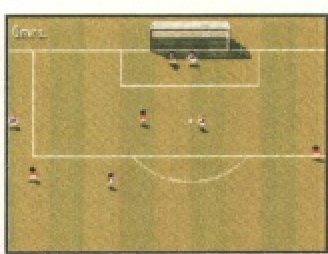


Hey, there are these woods, right, and - they're risky! (Thanks in the main to the legions of the Undead that roam its moonlight-dappled pathways). Yup, we're in horizontal-scrolling slash-'em-up territory here and not a bad one at that, although the scrolling is a touch 'jittery' in places.

Sensible Soccer V1.1

93%

Publisher	Renegade
Issue Reviewed	June 1992
Memory	512K
Price	£25.99



Here at The One we don't care what you OR your mates say - Sensisoccer kicks seven bells out of Kick Off 2. Instinctive control and out-and-out addictiveness make it a joy to play, and the improved goalies in this revised version have produced a game that's near flawless!

Shadoworlds

88%

Publisher	Krisalis
Issue Reviewed	November 1992
Memory	1Mb
Price	£25.99

From the same boys who brought you Shadowlands, Shadoworlds re-employs the Photoscape system to good effect in this Aliens-inspired RPG. The accent's more on action here than the puzzle-orientated Shadowlands and arguably suffers for it - shooting monsters in half-darkness can get annoying at times!

Space Crusade

89%

Publisher	Gremlin
Issue Reviewed	April 1992
Memory	512K
Price	£25.99



Space Crusade is actually one board game that deserved to be computerised. It removes all the fiddly moving plastic figures about business that made the cardboard version a chore to play. The isometric combat sections add to the already tense atmosphere and make this game a highly enjoyable experience.

Street Fighter 2

89%

Publisher	US Gold
Issue Reviewed	January 1993
Memory	1Mb
Price	£27.99

Street Fighter 2 on the Amiga isn't half bad at all. It's not as smart as the SNES version, agreed, and die-hard fans of the coin-op may be disappointed by some of the graphical like the lack of parallaxed backgrounds, but there's still no denying that this is one of the Amiga's better beat-'em-ups of late.

Titus the Fox

87%



Publisher	Titus
Issue Reviewed	April 1992
Memory	512K
Price	£25.99

Another platform game with Sonic overtones that certainly hits the mark, Titus is a huge and original game with some unique features (the Magic Carpet in particular). Extremely fast and furious, although the size of the levels is offset by the occasional paucity of baddies actually patrolling them.

Troddlers

85%

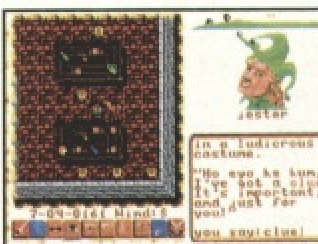


Publisher	Storm
Issue Reviewed	October 1992
Memory	512K
Price	£25.99

A puzzle game which is firmly Lemmings influenced, Troddlers adds to the DMA classic by introducing a number of different level objectives. If anything it owes a little more to Solomen's Key than Lemmings with its emphasis on block manipulation as a means to guiding the Troddlers to the level exit!

Ultima VI

91%



Publisher	Origin
Issue Reviewed	June 1992
Memory	1Mb
Price	£31.99

The latest (and possibly the last, on Amiga at least) in the long line of quality RPGs, Ultima VI is by far the best of the series, boasting attractive if diminutive graphics, incredibly involved plotlines and buckets of atmosphere. Not everybody's cup of tea but an impressive farewell (?) to say the least.

Vroom

89%

Publisher	Lankhor
Issue Reviewed	April 1992
Memory	512K
Price	£19.99

Sadly overlooked in the hoo-har over F1GP, Vroom (which came out a little earlier than the MicroProse game) is an exciting polygon-based racer that makes up for what it lacks in depth with a nifty turn of speed and huge fun factor. And a nice touch is you can even see your hands turning the steering wheel for once.

Wing Commander

87%

Publisher	Origin
Issue Reviewed	November 1992
Memory	1Mb
Price	£29.99

It's the PC-to-Amiga conversion no-one thought we'd ever see, but here it is and it's not half bad. It's got everything the PC version had and is thus just as impressive. Although the 3D can be sluggish at times, the superb feeling of actually taking part in a big space campaign pulls you through the occasional lulls.

Wizkid

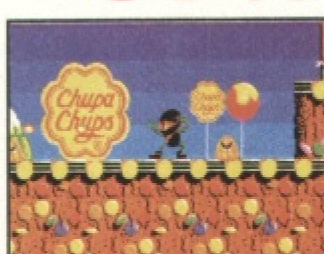
92%

Publisher	Ocean
Issue Reviewed	June 1992
Memory	512K
Price	£25.99

Without a doubt the best game that Ocean has released in a long while, Wizkid also happens to be its most original (all thanks to those crazy funsters at Sensible Software). On the surface it looks like a simple Breakout-inspired arcade game, but there is in fact a wacky arcade adventure lurking beneath. Fun!

Zool

87%



Publisher	Gremlin
Issue Reviewed	October 1992
Memory	1Mb
Price	£25.99

Gremlin certainly cooked up a character to rival even Mario and Sonic in this 'tribute' to the sad consoles. Fast, furious and manic in every way, Zool is a statement to industry that the Amiga can perform as well as the plastic slabs - and better! There's nothing like Zool to impress your mates.

COMPETITION

Recommended Compo time! All you have to do is answer the following questions to win one of ten great software prizes! Set to it...

(1) Which game we've recommended costs £31.99?
(2) Name the recommended games that were reviewed in the October 1992 issue.
(3) How many of the recommended games have arabic numerals in their title?

Answers on a postcard or back of a sealed envelope to the following address: Recommended Compo 3, THE ONE, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU. Be sharp with your entries, as it's the first ten that plop on our doormat that win!



The Blitter End

Those who read the excellent but ill-fated ACE may remember a feature entitled The Blitter End. Devoted to exposing the ruthless, the reckless and the riotous characters in this great software industry of ours, the Blitter was one of ACE's most perenially popular characters. Now he's back from retirement in the Cotswolds and he's ANGRY. As from next month he'll have his own column in the News but this month. to mark his return, we kick off with a one-page special. Take it away, Blit...

• Ah, it feels so good to be back. If truth be told, Blitter was never really cut out for retirement and the country life anyway. You can take the boy out of the software industry, but you can never take the software industry out of the boy. And what a time to return to the industry, in the middle of the gossip cauldron that was the Gamesmaster Live show and some very decadent Christmas parties. Rest assured, the Blitter may be older, but he is much wiser too and intends to be as ruthless and uncompromising in his pursuit of the rich and powerful as ever before, if not more so. So, to business, and to the birthplace of the Bard...

• The Blitter recently had occasion to attend the delightful Centresoft Sales Conference in Stratford Upon Avon. And who should I bump into there but the Blitter's old friends and longtime drinking companions Paul Miller and Ian Richardson, the lovable Merchandise Manager and Sales Manager for game giants Ocean. Unfortunately the Blitter had little time to reminisce with Paul and Ian, for they spent the latter part of the event standing on a table with their trousers around their ankles singing "I'm a little teapot". Long since used to Miller and Richardson's roistering behaviour, the Blitter hardly batted an eyelid - more than can be said for the scores of telesales girls and clients who witnessed the display.

• Here at the Blitter End we realise that System 3 is quite capable of creating enough trouble for itself without anyone else lending a hand, so we shall tactfully refrain from rubbing any salt into their recently-sustained wounds by making mention of the punch-up between joint bosses the Cale twins at the Industry Dinner last December, which has led to many of the company's employees since becoming occupationally-challenged.

• Of course, the Gamesmaster Live show had more than its fair share of amusing incidents, most of which are too scandalous for the Blitter to even contemplate making public (this month at least - bribes to the usual address please, you know who you are). One story that did tickle the Blitter's fancy, however, was the tale of television mogul Jane Hewland, whose company produces the excellent Gamesmaster television programme.

Apparently, when Ms Hewland checked out of the plush Metropole hotel where most of the exhibitors were staying, she was horrified to discover that an anonymous rogue had ordered 200 glasses of wine and charged them to her room number! The cad! The Blitter is anxious to stamp out dishonest behaviour of this kind, and so if any right-thinking individual would care to reveal the identity of the scoundrel, we will of course pass the information on. And print it.

• Moving quickly onto Hackney, home of my old friend, self-styled marketing supremo Dean Barrett, whose automotive antics have been causing the Blitter much merriment this month. Ever since he's been in the industry, with stints at Commodore, Emap and Ocean to his name, the once-portly software star has had flash company cars to drive around in. However, now that he owns his own fledgling company, Bastion Marketing, our Dean has had to make do with less swanky rental cars for a bit.

Unfortunately, Barrett is not entirely au fait with the ways of less upmarket motors, and his first experience with a rental Metro recently was not a happy one. After failing spectacularly to start the car one morning, Dean called out the mechanic no less than three times to check the engine - only to discover that he'd simply failed to pull out the Metro's manual choke. Having been brought up on expensive sporty numbers with automatic chokes, poor old Dean must have thought the clunky attachment was something to hang your filofax on.

• More antics from the Gamesmaster Live show and the exhibitor's party on Saturday night. During the alcoholic festivities, a certain magazine publisher who will remain nameless challenged estranged The One editor and now Gamesmaster magazine helmer Jim Douglas to limbo dance under a low table. The challenge was duly accepted, but halfway through the limbo attempt, said publisher saw a perfect opportunity for much merriment, and promptly booted Douglas in his vulnerable groin area, resulting in much writhing around in agony for the unfortunate Ed. And they say the art of comedy is dead...

• Following on from two recent (and adjacent) Work in Progress features on Street Fighter II and Gunship 2000 in The One, the two featured artists (namely US Gold's Tony Bickley and Microprose's Kevin Buckner) have made a bet to see who can get their name mentioned in this magazine the most. The Blitter understands that each time one of them has their name mentioned, the other has to buy them a pint.

Now, far be it from The Blitter to take sides, but Doctor David Upchurch over at the Kill Zone informs me that Tony has been very co-operative with the SFII tips this month, so we thought we'd return the favour: Tony Bickley, Tony Bickley, Tony Bickley, Tony Bickley, Tony Bickley, Tony Bickley, Tony Bickley, Tony Bickley. By my estimates that makes about eight pints you owe him, Kev...

• The latest issue of the impossibly-trendy Sky magazine carries within what must surely rank as the most ill-informed piece about computer games that it has ever been the Blitter's misfortune to read. It's only a snippet, but in one short paragraph the author comes across as more computer-illiterate than most other mainstream journos could manage in a lifetime. It reads (and I quote): "Rhythm King's computer game-mad managing director Martin Heath has already worked with crazy programmers The Bitmat (sic) Brothers to produce Zenon 2 (sic) - a shoot-'em-up adventure (sic) courtesy of Bomb the Bass, Betty Boo and others (sic)." The Bitmat Brothers? Zenon 2? Betty Boo and others? And they say there's no such thing as bad publicity...

• Blit! Blit!

NEXT MONTH!

Have we got a treat for you! We'll be carrying a playable demo of one of the hottest games of 1993, exclusive to all The One's lucky readers. It's so hot we'd advise you to have a tube of Calomine Lotion ready to put on your hands when you take it out of its protective placcy wrapping. And there'll be more top stuff on the disks to boot, plus all the usual smart reviews and features you've come to know and love from Britain's best Amiga games mag.

It all happens on the 28th of February when the March issue hits the shelves. You'll not want to miss out, so why not fill in this coupon, hand it to your so-called 'newsy' and make sure you don't miss out...

Dear Sir Newsagent of Cornershop,

I don't know what it is but I want it! And to make sure I'm not the sad individual breaking down in tears in your shop when I discover they've all sold out, please could you reserve/deliver (delete as applicable) March's issue of THE ONE for me.

Regards to your family, etc.

Name:...

Address:...